

A
DISCOURSE
OF
N A T U R A L
A N D
M O R A L I M P O T E N C Y.

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The Second Edition, with Additions left by
the Authors own Hand.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Robert Clavel*; and are to be
sold at the Sign of the *Peacock* in *St. Pauls*
Church yard, 1675.



T O T H E
Ingenuous, Christian
R E A D E R.



More fear the censures of those that shall read but part of this discourse, or take their estimate concerning the import of it at the second hand, from the representation of the Ignorant, or deeply pre-engaged Learned; than an attempted confutation of any deliberate Opposer; yet I promise myself exemption from neither.

I pretend not here to teach new Divinity, The things here maintained, that can be pretended strange, are not so remote from the common sentiments of men, as the most will suppose, being but the opinions, or the immediate consequences of such opinions, as the most moderate men have, at least virtually, granted, and maintained; though I cannot deny but many of them, being not well consistent

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with themselves, have also maintained the contrary; not that I hereby accuse any: for this is only a not denying such, while good Christians, to be, in this particular, ill Logicians.

That no man is justly bound by any Law of God, or man, any further than his natural faculties and powers reach, is written with indelible Characters on every man's Soul as legibly, as that there is such a thing as justice or injustice.

And secondly, That a man is bound by the Law of God (what ever some say to the contrary) so far; so that his greatest wickedness or averfation of will to obey it, will not excuse him, but really add to his inexcusableness; is as legible as that the greatest wickedness is wickedness, and doth not excuse. And he that will deny this, may with as much reason deny the moral laudability of Christ's obedience on Earth, or an Angel's in Heaven, because of their morally insuperable inclination of Will to such obedience; whereas such obedience is more laudable, as having more of the Will.

Yet thirdly, such wickedness, or averfation of Will to good, will as certainly, as what is most certain, hinder (else you must say, Man's wickedness is no hindrance, or so little a hindrance of his obedience, that he hath no need of the grace of the Holy Spirit to overcome it) I say, will most certainly hinder
man's

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man's compliance with the divine commands, till God shall take away, or overcome such reluctance of will by some such superfluence of Grace, as he is not bound in justice to afford them, or hold them excused. For God is bound in justice to do no more for men in order to the making them obedient to his Laws, or else to hold them excused for not being obedient; than so much as would render their not obeying his Laws culpable and inexcusable, if men were not wicked, or had no aversion of will to such obedience.

Now from these three positions by evident consequence follows, (supposing you will allow men to have any culpable or sinful Impotency on them; which he that denies, must affirm, that men can, for any Impotency on them whatsoever, so order their Conversations, as not to need Christ's death or pardon for their failings therein; And may also, with as much shew of reason, either deny, that it can, in any sense, be said truly, That Christ could not sin, or Angels in Heaven cannot sin, or God cannot sin, or lye; or else deny that this their morally insuperable rectitude or holiness of will was or is Morally commendable) I say, it hence follows,

First; That man's culpable Impotency lieth only in an Impotency, to do what he hath a power to do, or (to speak the same in other words) in Man's not being able to do in one sense, what he can do in another sense. And

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to say otherwise, is to forget, that *Morality* supposeth, and is subjected in a naturally capable subject, viz. in a rational Being, or a being indued with the power or faculty of free Will; And consequently that a *Moral* or culpable Cannot-obey, necessarily supposeth, and is subjected in natural power to obey; and a *Moral* or laudable Cannot sin, in a Natural power to sin.

Secondly; That the effect of the Grace of the Holy Ghost, lyeth not in man's receiving from God the meer power to obey God's Commands: Since, First, This power is due in justice, supposing he require obedience from men, and therefore is not from Grace (The Law supposes this, or it could not be a Law, because not obligatory to a man wanting such power.) And Secondly; Man could not sin, or be guilty, or inexcusable without this power, in not doing what the command requires; whereas men can sin without this Grace; else why do any pray for it for themselves or others to keep them from sin.

But the effect of this Grace lyeth in receiving from God something over and beside this power, to cause a man to do what he is bound to do, and would be too blame for not doing it, and therefore consequently had a power to do it, though this Grace had been denied him.

Me thinks these things are so clear, that it would be a reproach, not only to Learning,
but

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but to humanity, if any, especially of many Learned men, should be found seriously to hold the contrary.

Sure I am, that this distinction of Natural and Moral impotency, is of such Importance in Divinity, that they that shall speak of the Controversies hereby endeavoured to be cleared without keeping clear Notions about this distinction, shall (though otherwise learned Fathers and Doctors) speak like Children concerning them; And also that men of ordinary understandings, keeping to this distinction, may competently satisfy themselves and others, if willing to be satisfied in such Controversies as have posed the greatest wits and Shollars, that keep not to it.

I look upon St. Jerom's humour as much obstructing the increase of knowledg; who endeavoured to discourage attempts against his writings, by telling * Ruffinus, his Antagonist, that he had Hornes, and whoever meddled with him should find him a horned Beast. Yea, I so far dislike it, that I hereby signify to ingenuous men that shall have any inclination to reflect upon this discourse, that I am so far from having, or at least from desiring to have any such offensive weapons against the truth, that I desire to lye open to truth, by being naked of any armour of defence against it's convictions; And therefore have no great averfation to say, as those,

† Hic u-
rum de-
natio, &
reprens
iterum
iterumque
monere,
corruptam
bestiam
petis,
Hieron.
apoc. 1.
cor.
Ruffin.

To the Reader.

Judg. 19. 30. *once did, viz. [Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.] Provided, men would but observe the commonly neglected order prescribed in that speech, by practising the two first parts of the advice, before the last.*


That this discourse may be as influential to the promoting of Truth, Holiness, and Peace amongst us, as it is proper and suitable to such ends, is the prayer and hearts-desire of the Author.



A
DISCOURSE
OF
Natural and Moral
IMPOTENCY.

*You will not come to me that you might
have Life, John 5. 40.*

*No man can come to me except the Fa-
ther, which sent me, draw him, John
6. 44.*

T is so apparent, that a proper
Impotency (in the common
strict sense) doth excuse from
all obedience, to commands
before God and man, and
maketh all Conditional Pro-
mises on such a condition, so far from being
of Grace and kindness, that they are Nulli-
ties.

† The
Law
con-
struc-
tions of
our Com-
mon, and,
in cases
Testa-
mentary,
of the

ties, that all † Lawyers and Casuists general-
ly acknowledg it. And such as deny Man's
having any ability to Good, do it not wil-
lingly, but for fear of inconveniences on the
other hand; and though they do deny it, yet
at other times grant it implicitly, yea and flie
to it as the only refuge from extreams on
their own hand.

Civil Law, in making such conditional promises absolute;
do not contradict but confirm this, because made upon this
reason: else they would be Nullities.

And again; That there is an Impotency in
men to Good is apparent, not only from
Scripture, as, *No man can come to me, except*
&c. and can the Blackmore change his skin,
&c. but from the woful Experience of all;
yea the Heathens † acknowledged it, and
were puzzled how to give an account of its
original: so that he is a Monster of men that
doth not acknowledg and lament it.

† Plato.

Periphrase
also ex-
horts all
to la-

ment it as the Antients did, propounding the ancient Hea-
thens for a pattern, *lib. de Abst.*

Yet it is so apparent. That we are too blame
in not doing the things we have an Impo-
tency to, and that Promises of mercy to re-
turning Sinners are of Grace; that a man
should contradict his own knowledg and the
sentiments of all the world, beside the Scrip-
ture, to say otherwise: All which notions,
taken together, seem irreconcilable: and
are

are indeed irreconcilable (say men what they will) without some Distinction about Impotency.

Now it is a desirable thing, if possible, to come to a staiedness and consistency, that we may not as in the dark say and unsay, as the present difficulties press us on either hand, not knowing what we say, or whereof we affirm.

That Distinction well understood, which is much insisted on by the *French Protestant Divines*, would much conduce herein, namely, the distinction of *Natural and Moral Impotency.*

And though many of *Dr. Twisses* Judgment in other things, oppose it, yet he himself in many places, when pressed with difficulties, fled to it as his chief Sanctuary, *Vindic. grat. lib. 2. Errat. 9. Sect. 6. pag. (mibi)* *Rursus; impotentia faciendi (it is misprinted facience) quod Deo*

gratum est & acceptum. non est impotentia Naturæ sed morum: nulla enim nobis deest facultas naturæ, per peccatum originale; juxta illud Augustini, Nulli agnoscendæ veritatis abstulit facultatem. Adhuc remanet potentia quâ facere possumus quæcunq; volumus. And, Pag. 212. Amplius advertas, Impotentia, ex amputatione membrum orta, est impotentia naturæ; at impotentia ad bonum est duntaxat impotentia Morum, quâ nihil obstante poterit homo morale aliquod officium præstare si velit. So in his Answer to Hord. pag. 115. Observe (saith he) how this Author confounds Impotency Moral, which consisteth in the corruption of mens powers natural; and Impotency Natural, which consisteth in bereaving him of power natural.

A Discourse of Natural

This distinction of Natural and Moral power, or Impotency, is not used to affirm or deny the coming or arising of one or either of them from nature: for I am not now speaking *de origine*, whence they arise; but to denote the species or kinds, and the essential difference, of their Natures, * come they which way they will.

* Non refert
scilicet unde
cadat, scilicet
unde esse
faciendum
est. Manil

That is a Physical or Natural habit or action, that is neither *ἡδέως* nor *ἐπαινεσθῆναι* laudable nor vituperable *in genere morum*; that a man can neither be counted good and honest, or bad and dishonest, for his agility or lameness, dulness, blockishness, or acuteness; but may be (having such power, and doing accordingly) admired though not praised? and for the defect of such power may be pittied, but not blamed or punished: and this Impotency may be a punishment, but cannot be a sin.

The Moral and Ethical act or habit is just contrary. It is that which is laudable or vituperable, and that which a man may be looked on as honest or dishonest for.

Now Natural Impotency is always, in this sense, of something that a man cannot do if he would never so much; or hath not the very faculty of willing it.

The *Moral Impotency* is of something that a man hath the natural faculty to will, or can do it if he would; but is hindered only by moral vicious habits, from willing or doing it.

The

The Stoick Philosophers use to express this difference well, by $\tau\alpha \epsilon\phi' \eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$, and $\tau\alpha \epsilon\kappa \epsilon\phi' \eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$.

Every man (though he know not how to express this to others, nor possibly clear it to himself) hath a notion of these things differing ; and which belong to one sort, and which to the other ; and that one is capable of a just command or prohibition, the other not.

If any one hear of a man that abhors such a particular meat, which is Gods good creature appointed for food, he pities him, but doth not blame him ; and so, when he hears of the man that so abhorred Wine, that he could not receive it in the Sacrament : But if he hear of a man that hates and abhors God and good men, and that cannot endure to hear any good instructions, he blames him ; and is sure, this is not blameless as the other is. But I will speak more plainly, if possible.

That Man hath, and wanteth not, a natural power of doing any duty, who hath, first an objective Evidence, that is intelligible, fitted and suited objectively to produce the Act, that he either knows, or may know what is required of him, if he make that use of his understanding, that he hath power to do.

Secondly : That hath the natural faculties of understanding and willing the thing commanded, and that not only in *actu primo*, as, we say Natural Fools have ; but *actu secun-*

A Discourse of Natural

do. i.e. without natural impediments hindering their exercise : Here now is enough named already for all elicit Acts. viz. meer acts of the will and understanding.

Thirdly : Then he hath the natural power for performing the *imperate* acts, when there is no external or internal force, no man or thing hindering him ; and hath a body rightly disposed, is not deaf or blind, &c. and hath the outward helps necessary for some *imperate* acts, as, a sufficient estate to give, &c. So that he can do the *imperate* act if he would.

This is it, Then a man hath the *natural power* to do any thing, when he hath the natural faculties, and no hinderance but that he can do the thing if he would ; And then he hath a *Natural Impotency* when he hath not these faculties, or cannot do the thing commanded, if he would never so much. Now I will name the Proprieties of it.

First ; The want of this natural power, their *Natural Impotency*, doth excuse, as is commonly granted ; and they that deny it are not consistent with themselves, but unawares grant it. Total *Natural Impotency* doth excuse before God and Man : Yea all *Natural Impotency* doth excuse according to the measure and degree of it. Some little *Natural Impotency* doth in some measure, though not wholly ; *à tanto*, though not *à toto*. It is some excuse if a Servant be commanded a foot journey and go not, if something

thing lame, so that he could not go it but with great difficulty; but if quite lame (could not at all) a full excuse. If a man be *hectic*, blockish, something dull, it is some excuse for is not understanding difficulties in Religion, which he might yet possibly, with great difficulty, understand; but if quite a Fool, so as to have no more use of Reason than a Beast; it is a total excuse from any command to learn or understand. Without doubt a man of dull Intellectuals, is not bound to understand such things in Divinity, as require great acuteness of parts to understand; for, he cannot if he would. And doubtless a command for a man to will his own misery formally, or to kill his own happiness formally (which all agree, No man can do) would not oblige; so as that a man should be too blame in not doing it: since a man hath not the natural faculty or power to do such things.

If a man that is not much inclined to it, give himself over to sleep in times of Religious worship, it is a great fault: If a man be very sleepy, and sleep at such a time, it is some excuse, even so far as it arose from a natural cause; but yet it is a fault so far, as it was from carelessness to stir up himself, from want of the awe of Gods presence, so far as he might, if he would, do otherwise; but if it so seized on him, that his greatest desires and endeavours could not preserve him from it, no fault: Need I prove this? The very mention seems enough.

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All those Divines, consulted about it, took it for granted that it was not the duty of that good man, to drink wine in the Eucharist, that could not, if he would, and that the general command did not oblige him.

And all generally grant it as apparent, That the Heathens (that never had, nor could obtain the Revelation of it) shall never be condemned for not Believing Christ and his death, because they had not the means that were naturally necessary; And by the same Reason they must affirm (else they must say That is no reason, and find some other) that they shall not be condemned for not doing the things they could not do, and also that we shall not be condemned for not knowing or doing the things that we cannot know or do: else they must say, God had greater respect for the Heathen, than for us. There are only three Exceptions that I can call to mind, that are made by any to this general Assertion, with any shew of reason.

First, some make this Exception, That if a man's natural Impotency proceed from his own fault, or his Ancestors, so as to be his own fault, in Law, or reputatively; then it doth not excuse him from obedience to the command.

I think it apparent, that yet it doth excuse; and I wil bring their own strongest Instances; If a man have, by his own lewd courses, run himself into debt, so that now he cannot pay his debts if he would; his not paying in this case

case after his disability, ceaseth to be a fault. He ought indeed to lament that former wickedness, that brought this Natural Impotency upon him (and to aggravate it in his Confessions with these afflictive consequents, that, He cannot now pay, and, His Creditors are provoked, and God dishonoured) for he could then have done otherwise; And he ought to desire to pay, & for the future resolve to use such probably means diligently, as that he may hereafter be inabled to pay part or all, for this he can do.

But he cannot truly, when the Creditour bids him pay, and he would, but cannot, in his Confessions of his faults to God that day, say I have, to all my other sins, added this sin, that I did not this day pay the man when he required it. Now, suppose the Creditor had demanded it ten times in a day, there would have been ten several sins of injustice in not paying him his own, if he had been able to pay it; but he cannot, when unable, lament that, over and besides the committing those sins that disenabled him from paying, he is guilty before God of ten new faults that day in not praying. It cannot be said that a man overwhelmed in debt, through his own former defaults, and would pay but cannot, lives in known present omission of that which is his duty: And so if a man have, by some sinful ways broken his legs, or brought some Natural Impotency on himself, that he cannot go to hear a Sermon, he may lament his
for-

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former wickedness that brought that Impotency on him, but cannot lament it as his fault that day that he did not go to hear the Sermon: that is, he ought to lament that as his fault which he could have not done when he did it, and that is not to be lamented as his fault, which he could not do, when he did it not.

If you shall object, *But God may punish these men?* I answer, There can be no just punishment but for a fault; but this is no fault.

God may for ever punish them for those their faults that caused this Impotency: for they might have done otherwise, but not at all for the not doing that which they could not do.

If you object. *But men may punish the Debtor above-mentioned? Will you say, Laws are unjust that do so?* This Objection hath greatest strength to silence Antagonists, to run them upon the prejudice of speaking against wise Laws, and *Senatus-consulta*, and *Responsa prudentum*, which are to be revered. I Answer, the Law-makers, in allowing such men to lie in prison at the will of the Creditors, do justly and wisely: For, how could any be restrained from luxuriously lavishing all away with fear of Law, if when they had rendred themselves unresponsive, they were to be acquitted from punishment. Yea, they do not unwisely or unjustly (because humane laws must be general

neral and finite, and not infinite, and taking notice of all particulars, unless they will make this only Law, which would be virtually infinite. To leave all to the discretion of Judges, which *Legislators* that have care of the Common-Weal must not do,) I say they do not unjustly to suffer men to lie in Prison at the wil of the Creditor, where there was no fault, but the man's poverty came some way unexpected, and unavoidable by humane prudence; because greater inconveniences would ensue in having a Law to free men from punishment from the Creditors, if poverty came on them without any fault. Because it is an easie thing to conceal Estates, and this would unavoidably subject Creditors to the Will and Conscience of their Debtors: whereas there is far greater reason that the Borrower (as *Solomon* speaks) should be Servant to the Lender, and in his power; than that the Lender should be Servant to the Borrower and in his power: and it is more agreeable to natural equity, and Reasons of Government; and the contrary would be destructive to the Community. *Legislators* suppose, or will and desire, that Creditors will not keep Debtors in Prison when unable to pay, and this disability came on them without any former fault, as in riotous mis-pending, but if Creditors do otherwise, they judg it would be more inconvenient to the Community, to hinder them by a Law, than to leave it to their own Conscience.

science. But if there was a fault, whereby they came to their want, the Creditors do justly in keeping them in prison (provided the punishment exceed not the offence) if they have respect to their former fault and wickedness in mispending, and also do it to make them warnings to others that they do not sinfully lavish. But if any should know he is unable, and yet keep his Debtor in Prison, not with respect to his former fault, or to warn others; but merely in wrath and vexation, because he doth not pay him when he knoweth he cannot, it would be sinful and irrational, because, so far, it is for no fault. But now, God will not do such a thing (as humane Laws must suffer, and some irrational sinful men may do) in his immediate Government; He can infallibly distinguish where a fault is, and where none; And as he will not punish a man for not paying his debts, when his Poverty came on him by the hand of God, and not by his own default; so where his disability to pay did come by his own sin, he will not punish him for that which was no fault, as his then not paying when he could not; but for that which was his fault, his sinful making himself unable when he could have done otherwise.

The instance of Drunkenness seems difficult to be answered, I may here be overwhelmed with the Authority of those that grant, All Natural Impotency doth excuse, except that Impotency of understanding and will,

will, that ariseth from drunkenness; and that this is so far from excusing, that it *increaseth the fault, I shall, before I directly answer, premise this, (which I perceive is the greatest Objection against what I shall say, and causeth the Mistake of Casuists in determining otherwise ;) Just and prudent, and necessary Laws that men ought to make, are not to over-rule our judgements here. I like well that saying of our English Lawyers, that, The Law will rather suffer a mischief, than an Inconvenience ; meaning by a Mischief, that which may fall too heavy on a particular man accidentally ; and by Inconvenience that which would be a general Inconvenience to the whole Community; it being incumbent on them *Ne quid decrimenti respública caperet*. It would be a miss, could it be helped without a greater Inconvenience, to allow an injured man's testimony to take away another's life; yet I think it a good Law that a man's Oath against him that robbed him, is Evidence enough to a Jury; because otherwise, whereas not one in many is apprehended, they might so order their Robberies, as not one in a multitude would be punished So the Law of concealing a dead Bastard-Child seems hard, but is necessary on this account. God himself, if he make Laws, possibly fit for humane Judicatures; they must subject some to mischief in the Lawyer's sense, as that of the Oath of two Witnesses being irrefragable, which some innocent man might suffer by.

τοῖς με-
θύουσι δι-
πλατὰ τὰ
ἐπιτίμια.
Arist. ad
Nicom.

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I think, *Legislators* do wisely and justly in inflicting a penalty on men for doing the thing when drunk, that they would inflict if he had done it when sober ; For

First, for the most part, Men drunk have the use of their will and understanding in some measure, and so may at that time be restrained by consideration of the penalty; and they have also at that time the greatest need for the most part to be restrained by the greatness of the penalty ; And if they then knew there was no danger, or no great danger of the penalty, the punishment being to be mitigated ; it would subject the Innocent to the Lusts and rage of Drunken men

Secondly : Suppose, some may be quite mad with drink, and utterly deprived of the use of Reason, and consequently of Will, and yet are capable of committing such wicked acts (I mean materially wicked) : It would be an imprudent particular Law that should be made to spare such ; because the most that commit enormities in their drink, would escape upon this pretence; and many would designedly drink to excess, that they might without danger, or with little danger, be revenged, or fulfil some other Lust ; and they would know that the more horrid their fact was (as killing a Father) the more likely they would be to escape upon pretence of madness, as if none, but one mad, would do it

Thirdly : There would yet be something
of

of justice, though wholly deprived of the use of reason, because the punishment is for the offence of Drunkenness, which was voluntary; and to make other dread Drunkenness, especially they that have in this respect the most need, that are apt to be in a rage by it, as that which may bring on them, by the consequence, Capital punishment. And also when the Law gives a man as much power to hold his neighbour to his Bargain which he made when Drunk as when Sober; partly it may be for penalty; and partly it may be for inconveniencies, that otherwise would follow, were the Law otherwise. And yet no Conscientious man (however in ordinary cases) would hold a man to his bargain if quite, or but almost, deprived of the use of his reason by his drink. But to speak to the Case.

If a man should, through Drunkenness, proceed to such madness, as to be totally deprived of the use of his reason, and should then kill a man; he ought, when in his right mind, lament the sin of making himself Drunk; and ought to aggravate it with such Circumstances: but he might rather look on his killing the man, as a punishment God suffered him to incur for his sin, and as his sorrow, rather than any distinct sin; for it would not be properly and formally Murder, nor any other sin; because not at all voluntary: for if there be no Understanding, it is impossible there should be any thing of Will,

will, univocally & properly so called; & proportionably it lessens that particular fault if almost deprived of Reason. Yet I dare not say with *Augustine, lib. 22. Contr. Faust. Manic. cap. 44. Culpandus est Lot, non quantum ille Incestus in ebrietate admissus, sed quantum illa ebrietas, meretur*, That this, that Lot was to be blamed for his Drunkenness, but not for his Incest. Because Expositors are not agreed of the meaning of the place; And I durst less say it of his second Incest: for he might be guilty of Incest interpretatively, it not being enough against his will, while he had the use of it, if he, before his second Drunkenness, knew what had fallen out in the first, and might not improbably suppose the like might follow again. But I should be tiresome, if I should endeavour too great exactness. You see the thing, in *thesi*, made plain, and that is enough here. Suppose a Master find his Servant Drunk to a total senselessness, and then should utter such words as these, I command thee now to go immediately such a Journey, would it not be irrational in the Master to be angry at his Servant, not only (which he may be) for making himself Drunk, and unfit for hearing and obeying his commands, both which he could not have done when he did them; But also for his not going the journey at that time when he knew he could not?

Secondly; Others make this Exception, that all Natural Impotence doth excuse, except

cept the man think he is able, and that he hath the Natural power to do the thing he is commanded, and then it doth not excuse; then it is his fault not to do the thing commanded, though he cannot. The instance they use to bring is this, If a Servant be bound in his bed, that he cannot rise, he knowing nothing of it, and his Master calls him, and bids him rise; but he resolvedly lies still and will not.

This is easily answered: For any one may see that the fault here, is not, That he did not rise, which he could not; but that he did not will, desire, or endeavour to rise, which he could do.

This Instance rather confirms what I say. And again, this Instance is very improper for the thing it is commonly brought, and as it is commonly applied; for this seems to take for granted, that the wicked are in no fault, in that they do not Repent and Believe; and so that the commands of Repenting and Believing do not oblige them; but only it is their fault they do not desire, will, and endeavour to do these: and it is to grant they may will, desire, and endeavour to obey the Gospel, as having no Impotency to these, but only cannot do the thing desired. Whereas I must deny this as pelagianism, and must say, that, in the sense they cannot believe and obey, they cannot desire, will, and endeavour it; and I can shew you that to will so far as to come to the prevailing choice,

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would

would be Saving. Yet these mean the prevailing degree: For when they tell men they cannot believe the Gospel, but wish them do what they can, *viz*: Will it; they do not mean that they exhort them by this to will, to obey the Gospel in such a low degree, and so remissly, as yet to will prevailingly to reject the Gospel. This again implies to make it sense, That, if wicked men did know (as the Objectors suppose themselves do) that they have no Power, then it would be no fault for them to reject the Gospel. And then it would be Ministers duty indeed (or they are very cruel to Souls) to tell them, they have no Natural power to Repent and Believe, to free them from this supposed error, that they might be free from fault, and know they are not bound to comply with the Gospel.

Object. But is it no aggravation of the very not doing any thing, when a man thinks he can do it, and cannot?

I Answer. Not in the least: For Natural Impotency cometh not in the least within Morality. You may as well say, it would lessen a mans fault before God, that thinketh he hath no greater an estate then will meerly serve his Family-necessities, and spends it on a great Feast, to have a superfluous Estate before that's safn to him that he knew not of.

Thirdly, Others make this Exception to the general rule, *That mans Natural Impotency*

potency to obey, doth excuse from obedience, except the reason why men obey not, be, not because they cannot, though they cannot, but because they will not; and this, say they, is the common cause of mens not Believing and Repenting; they cannot with this proper *cannot*, distinct from will-not; and yet that is not the reason why they do not Repent and Believe, but because they will not, now though such design the same (I believe) that I do in this discourse, yet to bring these dark words into the light, is enough to shame them. Either they, that make use of this evasion mean by *cannot*, the Natural Impotency of doing the very same thing that he cannot do; or else only deny the power of doing the thing he hath an Impotency to; but grant a power, notwithstanding of doing another thing required of him different from that he wants the Natural power of doing.

1. If they mean it in the first sense, *ad idem*, that a man cannot do the same thing required, but the reason why he doth it not, is not because he cannot.

First: It is a Contradiction, as you may see in any instance keeping to the same, If a man have not the Natural power of Willing, this cannot but be a cause, yea a sufficient cause, yea the only cause of his not Willing. It would be a strange idle kind of hindrance that hinders not; a strange kind of Impotency to doing, that hinders not that doing,

that is no reason of the not doing. This is to say, A mans blindness is no reason or cause of his not seeing, or, not the only cause.

Secondly : It is contrary to express Scriptures, to say, their *cannot* is no reason of their not Believing. We must say, that a mans Impotency of Believing, in what sense soever we take his Impotency, is the cause and reason of his not Believing: For that Impotency that Christ speaks of, is given as the reason why men Believe not on him, *John 6. 64, 65.* There are some of you that Believe not: For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that Believed not, and he said, *Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father.* So *John 8 43.* *Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my Word; you are of your Father the Devil; that is, You are so wicked, you are of such Devilish qualities.*

II. If they mean by these words, that the fault is, notwithstanding their Impotency, that they do not some other thing than that they have the Impotency to; and so the meaning is, He hath an Impotency to something; but his fault is, that he doth not that which he hath a power to do, and hath no Impotency at all to. First: This rather confirms what I am saying, yea overgoes me quite, as you will after see. Secondly: This is no more to the purpose, than to say,

A blind man is too blame for not hearing, because his Impotency to seeing, doth not hinder his hearing; yet this is apparently the chief Part of the meaning of this saying, as it is applied by those that use it.

Thirdly : This Saying leaneth upon an aiery, nice, false implied difference or distinction; or it would have no colour of reason, which is this, between Willing, desiring, endeavouring to Repent and Believe, and Actual Believing and Repenting. But any that looks upon these actions as elicit acts of the Will (with the heart man Believeth and Repenteth) may know, this is a Contradiction. Imperate acts require another power distinct from the Will to execute them, and so may be hindered by the want of that other Power, as want of Estate to give; but it is otherwise where they are not Imperated, but only Elicited. What should hinder, if a man Willed it to the prevailing degree? nay it is the thing it self, and if one could suppose such a thing possible, God would accept it without the distinct thing from it you suppose, called Repenting and Believing, while he would do it, and it is no fault of his, no want of Will, they do not follow; and to think otherwise, would be to have hard thoughts of God.

Fourthly : This leaneth upon another false foundation, that men have no Impotency at all to Willing, desiring, or endeavouring that which is good; which to

affirm, as I said before, is Pelagianism. Yet, you must not charge men with that doctrine that follows from their unwary obscure speeches by remote consequence, when it may be said of them, That if they saw it followed, they would not use those speeches, and do disown the consequence as not seeing it follow.

Thus I have, *I think*, satisfactorily made out, that Natural Impotency doth excuse from fault. This is the first property of Natural Impotency, wherein it differs from Moral; I have been large in this, but will recompence it with brevity in the following.

Secondly : A second property of this Natural Impotency is this, Natural Impotency (*viz.* when a man hath not the faculty of willing, or cannot do the thing if he would) would make all conditional promises made upon condition of doing that that men have this Impotency to do, nullities. Suppose the promise made to fallen man that hath no wings, If you fly you shall be saved, would not this have been so far from gracious, as to be a Nullity? Yea though *Adam* had had wings, and lost them by his sin, from himself and us; as indeed I grant the case to be much so, in respect of original sin between *Adam* and us: Could any man seriously give thanks for such a promise, or say, It was a kind and gracious promise?

The sticking to this opinion of mans Natural

tural Impotency to perform the Gospel-condition, hath driven some, otherwise learned and worthy men, to deny, Such are promises, *viz.* If men Believe and Repent, they shall be saved; and to use this argument for their opinion, that if they be, they are no more gracious than the Law. I must say, their argument is unanswerable, if a man now have no more power to fulfil the Gospel-condition, than to make all his sins undone. Nay, there are no degrees in Impossibilities or total Cannots. It is no more of grace to say to a man, If thou wilt run a mile I will give, &c. if he cannot, than if thou wilt run a thousand. To say, men have not the Natural power to perform the Gospel-condition, is to set forth God as one that mocketh; and to say, He will encrease their misery if they do not, is to set him forth as doing (*horresco referens*) worse than mocking. What fearful things are extreams?

Thirdly: While there is this Natural Impotency of obedience to a command, or performing the condition of a promise, men that obey not, or fall short of the thing promised, will never repent of, or befool themselves for it; for that which they could not help if they would never so much. I forbear aggravating this opinion, as having load enough on its back already to make any considerate man stand off lest it fall on him.

Now I come to speak of the Moral or Ethical Impotency. It is a thing as quite

different from Natural Impotency as can be almost supposed, as I shall shew you. They agree in nothing, but only in the thing that is the reason of the Metaphor borrowed from Natural Impotency, to express this by which is this, That as a lame man cannot walk, a blind man see, or dead arise without a Miracle; so neither can these ever Repent and believe without some wonderful help from Heaven, though upon another account it cannot be done, and not because they want the Natural power of doing it.

Moral Impotency is when a man hath the Natural power, can do the thing in respect of his Natural powers, but will not; and not only so, but cannot obtain of himself to will it, though yet he hath the Natural power of obtaining this of himself, else it would be a Natural Impotency; as, a Fool hath not the Natural power to obtain of himself to will a thing, hath not the right Natural use of his faculties; So (as all agree) a man hath not the Natural power of willing his own misery, as his misery; or of nilling his own happiness: his soul is not framed capable of these things; and therefore these things come not within Morality; neither are, nor possibly can be matter of a serious command or serious prohibition.

These expressions, *à se impetrare non potest ut velit*; he cannot find in his heart to chuse it, cannot obtain of himself to will it, seem be fittest to represent it to you by.

And

And it is not from any Natural defect that he cannot find in his heart, cannot obtain of himself to will it, but from his Wickedness, his pride, Covetousness, Malice, Voluptuousness, and such things as prevail with his will in a Moral way, to keep it fast to them, *John 5 44 How can you Believe, that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only: That is (as you may see, comparing cap 12. v. 43) This hinders you from giving your selves up to me and my obedience, your Pride, your affectation of applause, your care to keep up your Repute amongst your Friends and Acquaintants. This Impotency is the same with that which a man means when he saith, I cannot break my own Legs; not but that he can do it if he would, but he is so resolved to the contrary upon some arguments that prevail with him, that all that you can say, cannot Perswade him to do it.*

This Impotency is a rational thing, so far as that may be called rational which is done upon reasons, but inconsiderable and slight reasons, and upon fallacious arguments and grounds, and such as he doth, or might know to be fallacious, did he make due use of his reason: Else it would be a Natural Impotency, and a man could be no more blamed for it, than you can blame a man for his antipathy to Cheese, that is not chosen upon any arguments. Now in this sense a *Cannot* and *Will not* are all one; they do
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not differ *specie*, in kind ; only, in degree : It is a higher degree of volition or chusing ; you may call it Wilfulness, stubbornness, Obstinacy, Moral Impotency, all these signifie the same. *Dent. 21. 18. If a man have a stubborn Son that will not obey the voyce of his Father,* Stubbornness is only a Will not obey, not a Cannot in the properest sense as opposed to Will not ; only a higher degree of will not, but of the same species. In this sense are apparently these and such Scriptures to be understood ; Can the blackmore change his skin ? so, He that is accustomed to evil cannot do well. The first Cannot here is Natural, and so without fault ; he cannot change his skin if he would never so fain, and therefore a command to change it would not oblige : But the second is the Moral Cannot, *Gen. 37. 4. Josephs Brethren hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him ;* that is, through envy, not but that they could if they would. *Luke 11. 7. Trouble me not, my door is shut, and my children in bed, I cannot rise to give thee.* This cannot is a will-not upon such reasons, and is so explained in the words following ; Though he will not rise ; yet because of his Importunity he will rise and give him whatsoever he needeth. In this sense the Carnal mind is Enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God ; neither in deed can be, in this Moral sense, And God giveth us power in this sense (observe, I do not say only in this sense, but mostly

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as the chief meaning, for something *I* could say, but *I* must not intermix things aliene) not by giving new faculties; but by causing us to will, and do of his own good pleasure. *Phil. 3. 13.* And in this sense we pray, *Create in us a clean heart, and renew a right Spirit within us.* No man can come to me except the Father draw him, meaneth no more than that, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, only it may denote a more strong overflowing stream of the will, and a resolved refusal of him: or, to speak more exactly, it denotes the Will-not with a *modus*; and modes do not differ really from the things modified; It denotes the Will not with this wicked modification, that this will-not will always continue, unless God do by some super-effluence of his grace make them willing of unwilling; not but that they had the Natural power or faculty of willing it, or could if they would without that adventitious drawing; but they were so resolved against submitting to him, that they could not obtain to will the contrary; yea this *Cannot* was through their own choice upon some reasons like that, *Luke 14. 20. He had Married a Wife and could not come*: The design of the parable is to shew what hinders men from coming to Christ, and how inexcusable they are in refusing such offers; the meaning therefore is not, that his new Wife did cling about him, or tye his legs that he could not, (for this would have excused;) but that he chose to stay and entertain himself with
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his new Married Wife, as more desirable to him than the Feast. And so, one must go see his Oxen, and another his Farme. The meaning is, it is so far from being an indifferent thing to me, whether I leave my Wife to go or not, that I so quite præponderate the other way, that I cannot so much as obtain of my self to parley about it, to debate upon it; my reason is so great, that you may well excuse me; have me excused. But this will admit of no excuse, there is no sufficient reason can be given for forsaking the Fountain of Living Waters, to go to broken Cisterns; and this they did, or might have known.

I could here, if there was need, demonstrate further to you, that it is impossible there should be any thing but Will in this Impotency; for if there was, it would excuse so far. But this will appear more fully in going on, and I suppose I may spare my self that labour: For to make this fully intelligible to you, is I think enough to prove it. And therefore I will represent it further to you. The Angels in Heaven have an Impotency of Sinning (if I may call the Moral perfection an Impotency, which is most properly to be called the Moral power, being a holy rectitude of Will, and the power opposite to the Moral Impotency, *in eodem genere morali*; and so is of the same general nature, and fit to explain this by; for it is a *Moral Cannot* sin, not a *Natural*, for they have the Natural power of sinning, can sin if they would; else it would

not be laudable Morally ; no more than it is, that a Beast cannot sin) they have such a Moral rectitude and goodness, they cannot obtain of themselves to Will it ; but you may as well go and perswade a man in his right mind to put his hand into the fire : they neither will nor (in the sense explained) can Will it, nor dare, (the Angel durst not bring a railing accusation) and that for substantial and weighty reasons. This calls to mind those expressions, *How can I do this evil.* And *Rev. 2. 2. Thou can'st not bear those that are evil.* And *1 John 3. 9. He cannot sin, because he is born of God ;* and, *Gods people are dead and Crucified unto the World and to sin.* Which last words shew, that if you will have *dead* in Scripture alwayes to signifie a want of Natural power, you must say that Gods people have not a Natural power to sin, cannot sin if they would.

I dare say farther, you have such apprehensions of God, as of Angels, and of good men (I mean Analogically) though you should in anger say, you have not ; However I am sure, you ought to have such apprehensions ; for otherwise you have unworthy and sinful apprehensions, and contrary to Scripture, which speaketh in such a way as God must speak, or else could not be understood by us, in speaking of Himself. I say, you have such apprehensions of God, as you borrow from these things amongst men, when you thank God for keeping Covenant and Promise ; you apprehend, He hath the

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A Discourse of Natural

Natural power of destroying you when he will, notwithstanding his promise; else you cannot possibly thank him for keeping Covenant. You might indeed admire him under a contrary Conception; but not thank him; for Thanks, in the very formal Conception of it, is for doing some thing that one had a Natural power to do otherwise.

If any should conceive that his Promise, like some kind of Charm, did take away his Natural power of being provoked to will or do otherwise; it would be a very sinful apprehension; for, during such a Conception, a man could not give thanks for his keeping promise, unless in jest. You have apprehensions of his keeping promise, as not coming from not having Natural power to do otherwise; but you conceive of him as being hindered from destroying his people, notwithstanding their great provocations, and from dealing falsely in his Covenant, upon the account of something in him, that you conceive of Analogically to Moral Virtue and goodness, even Justice, and Faithfulness and Truth, *Gen. 9. 16. I will look upon the Bow in the Cloud, that I may remember my Covenant*; Implying, he hath power to destroy the Earth again with a Flood, notwithstanding his Covenant.

Now I will, according as I promised, shew you the different properties of this *Moral Impotency* from Natural; and it is contrary in every thing to Natural, which shews they are contrary indeed.

First,

First : this Moral Impotency doth not excuse from fault, or make threatnings unjust. Nay it is also in this contrary to Natural (which *I* would have you observe and consider well, to convince you of their great difference) ; That the Natural Impotency, the greater it is, by so much the more it doth lessen the fault in not obeying the command ; and the less it is, by so much the more it doth greaten the fault : But the greater it is the greater is the fault, and more blameworthy, and further from excuse ; and the less it is, the less faulty. For any to say, *I* cannot-but hate the Minister that reproves me ; and any that live holy lives, *I* cannot but wish some great fall or mischief to them ; for they call my sins to my remembrance, and admonish me to leave my wicked ways ; and *I* am resolved not to leave them ; *I* have so firmly chosen this way, that *I* am resolved not to change : This is the meaning of [*I* cannot obtain of my self to leave this way] will any say, this is not a greater fault ? If a Thief should say, Once *I* was almost willing to have left my course of life ; but now *I* am resolved to stick to it, notwithstanding all Laws and dangers ; and he say true, Is he not now more too blame than formerly, and less excuseable ? Would not all humane Judicatures look upon that man as mad, that should say, This doth excuse, or not aggravate his fault ?

Secondly : This Moral Impotency doth
not

not hinder promises from being of Grace. This is not to mock men, to promise a reward, if they will do that which they have this Moral Impotency to do. Nay such a promise is not a jot less gracious, than if there was all readiness and willingness of mind in us to embrace it, by performing the condition; when only, chosen, wicked willfulness hinders. He is bound nevertheless to thank him; and, as the Apostle saith, Mans unbelief cannot make the Faith (meaning the Faithfulness) of God of none effect; so our wickedness and unthankfulness doth not make the Grace of God cease to be Grace, and his kindness cease to be kindness.

If an Act of Oblivion be made by the Prince (when the Rebels are in his power, and Justice saying, Shall I smite them, shall I smite them?) provided they will acknowledg their offence in some humble manner and submit; if some, yea if all should say, and that truly, We so hate him, notwithstanding this kindness; and we shall be so scoffed at by those we have made great boasts of our resolvedness unto, and they will say, *Where is that mouth wherewith thou said'st, Who is * Abimeleck?* that we cannot through these reasons obtain of our own wilful and proud hearts to submit; yet it was a great favour and kindness, as long as the condition was so easie to them, that they had the Natural power so easily to do it. Yea, and though they had no benefit by it, but their Condem-

demnation was increased. So though it may truly be said of some, *It was good for them if they had never been born, and Christ never been born, or dyed, and no Law of Grace ever made*; yet all this hinders it not from being of Grace, while this falling-short, was through their own wickedness.

Thirdly: They that through this Moral Impotency, this insuperable obstinacy, refuse to yield, will befool themselves, Was I mad! I was told and knew: What hindred me, but my own wickedness?

I will now set before you one Instance to make all plain, and to call the summe of what hath been said to your mind. Suppose a Father hath a Son, both Vicious and Debauch't, and also Lane; which Lameness (because I will forestall all possibility of exception) proceeded from some former wickedness, as, in endeavouring to kill his Father: Suppose his Father should say, Thou hast long deserved to be dis-inherited, and I am now about to dis-inherit thee irrecoverably in selling my Land; But now Run, and I will receive thee into favour. He may reply, *Father, I thank you for nothing, this is to mock, I cannot.* And again, here is no fault in not-running, and he will never afterwards befool himself for, and repent of not-running, though dis-inherited upon it: This is Natural Impotency. But now, suppose the Father say, *Son, thou art Vicious and Debauch't, living loosely abroad; but now live at*
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home

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home with me, and leave these Vicious courses, and I will receive thee; He hath the Moral Impotency to this, Can the Blackmore change his skin? so he accustomed to evil, cannot do well; and so the Son goes on in his old course, and cannot obtain of himself to do otherwise. Here notwithstanding, he ought to say, Father, I thank you, this is a kindness to condescend to such easie terms, after such great provocations; and this will not excuse him; and he will be-fool himself after, and say, Oh that I had hearkened!

Obj. But, Is not the whole of your discourse notoriously against the knowledg and experience of men? Cannot we say of wicked men, They would forsake their sins but cannot? and do not the best complain with *Paul*, when they would do good, evil is present, and they have a will, when yet to do good they find not? they are sure they would do more good than they do. And do you say, They do not sin in not doing those things they would, but cannot?

Ans. First: There is a willingness in wicked men to escape Condemnation, and attain Salvation: this is supposed, else God would never promise these upon a condition. Though yet they may be said indirectly, and interpretatively, to will and chuse death, in chusing those courses that lead to it, and so have their choice, all things considered, in perishing: for they chuse rather to undergo his wrath, than to accept him on the

the terms and conditions of his love and favour.

Secondly : They would, if it could be (and wish it might be so) have Christ, and Heaven, and their Lusts too.

Thirdly : They, or many of them, are willing to do many things for Salvation, would part with some sins they can best spare, and do some duties they have no great averfness to, and so either do leave such sins, or would actually if they really thought, Going so far would serve the turn.

Fourthly : They, or some of them, have a remiss Will to perform the whole Gospel-condition, to give up themselves to the obedience of Faith; but the actual choice, the prevailing part of their will, is against it. *Aristotle's* Instance is pertinent to explain this by, *ad Nicom. lib. 3.* A Mariner casts his goods over-board in a Storm, to save his Life and Ship. He puts the question, Whether such actions should be called voluntary or involuntary; he calls them *μικλὰς πράξεις*, *mixt actions*, for (saith he) No man would cast away his goods, altogether willingly; *ἐβίκασι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐκαστοίς* but they are (saith he) rather voluntary actions; for they are chosen and preferred by them as the wisest actions in such Circumstances. Such a man would fain have his riches preserved, and yet rather than lose his life, chuses not to keep them; resolved, though repining, to cast them away, with the prevailing choice.

And though the other weaker inclination be a will, a remiss will, or volition naturally so called, and really, being a desire upon some reasons, μέγα λόγου ὀρεξις as Aristotle defines βέλους rightly, yet Morally it may be said to be no-Will: For it is not to denominate, not being the prevailing choice, *Qui mavult, vult*, only in this sense: so that you may say They will not, in ordinary custom of speaking: For where this chusing-Will is, the imperate acts essentially follow, and are performed in some measure; or, where they do not follow, it is as much accepted by God as if they did, *e. g.* If a mans prevailing choyce be to go to the Church, he goes; If to stay at home, he stays; if to pray, he prays; to give, he gives: except there be such a hindrance as will so far excuse, as if he had done it; as, suppose the νευροσπασία should be stiff or stubborn, when the Will is not.

You see wicked men would have Christ and Heaven, and would therefore remissly (what they are convinced is the only means) Holiness of heart and life; yet the prevailing will is rather to lose happiness, than to forgoe all their lusts; to let go the offered happiness, rather than live a Spiritual, Heavenly life; something unwilling, thus to lose all; yet, with the prevailing bent of their will, prefer this sinful course.

Fiftly: In the regenerate, the prevailing choice of their will, is for the best Interest, and

and this will Denominate, they are willing in the properest sense: there is no sin but they habitually would have strength against it, and no duty, but they would have strength to perform it; And this will be accepted of God unto Salvation.

But yet their Will is renewed but in part, and they have much unwillingness to it, and will to the contrary; they do not will in such a degree as they ought; and this is their sin. They would do such and such difficult duties, and yet they would not; and this is a Lamentation, and should be for a Lamentation. When I say, they *Would* in a prevailing degree, I know this cannot always be affirmed particularly *pro Hic & Nunc*, else they would never omit any known duty, or commit any known sin; for, the Imperate acts would follow the Elicit.

I am something at a loss here, how to express my Conceptions, which are not very clear. But you may conceive, a Child may some-time disobey, provoke his Parents, though his general and habitual bent of heart and will be, to please him. And so, Gods people's willingness to the whole, and in general, is greater than their unwillingness, though not in the particular Act of known sin; else I could not tell how to maintain, that a Regenerate man hath the Gospel-condition in the main, during a wilful sin, and so is not unjustified; whereas I cannot think, such a one hath quite changed

his ultimate end, and is become un sanctified, like another man for a time. Me-thinks those words of the Apostle serve best of any I can think of, to express my meaning by, which if it be not the meaning of the words, I only allude to them, *viz.* "So then, with the "mind I my self serve the Law of God, but "with the flesh the Law of Sin. I my self, which part do I my self with most may prevail? which side do I take? which interest do I frown at and wish might go down? That is *I my self*, my will in the properest sense, which I prevailingly, habitually choose, so as to be most displeased with my unwillingness; and I find, I am not displeased, or not much, at my unwillingness to sin.

I know it is difficult, when a mans choice but-just turns the scale, and is not vehement to discern which part he prevailingly takes; And people though of great and strong affections to things above, and in whom things below have very little Interest; yet if their Reason be clouded with Melancholy or otherwise, it is hard for them to know which is *I, I my self*, and which side they mainly take; yet this is the way to enquire: For come to a wicked man, and he may say, I my self serve the flesh and world, and that interest I am most careful to secure and maintain, whatever become of the Spirit's Interest; though my mind and Conscience is for the Law of God, and serving of that;
and

and so I have a will to do something; but the side I my self take, and am most careful it go not down, is the Flesh-interest. And to answer to *Rom. 7.* I grant that *Paul* speaks in the person of a Regenerate man, though some worthy men oppose it, and as for what they object, that he speaks of it as *Aristotle* represents his ἀρπαγῆς, his Incontinent man who is ἡμιπρόσωπος, below a Moral man; it is easily made apparently unlike, if one by sin mean not gross sins, but those of daily infirmity which *Aristotle* accounted no sins; and by Flesh, mean the most subjugated, hated part of his will and affections; and by his Mind, the prevailing interest which he sided with. However there is as much said, *Gal. 5 17.* *For the Flesh Lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that you cannot do the things which you would;* which words are confessed to speak of the Regenerate. But to Answer, First, I doubt not but the Apostle desired to be freed from many Natural Imperfections that were his sorrows and punishments for sin, and not his sins. Secondly, We must say, the reason why the Apostle or any other do not do any duty they would, is, because they do not will it enough; and what he did will in the prevailing degree he did it in some imperfect measure. But he would fain have been freed from all unwillingness, and have gotten on his Will further, but could not obtain it. And whereas, he

faith, *It is no more I*; that is in the vulgar sense, as to denominate, not proceeding to the choice; for his countenanced, loved, prevailing choice was the contrary. It was against his will, which was most strictly his will; (though too much his will); and so God would accept it to Salvation.

Sixthly: I add this as an overplus: Was there as full a willingness, as our frail and naturally defective humane Nature is capable of, there could be no actual sin; I mean so full a willingness only, as to exclude every degree of unwillingness. For, where the reason why men do not, is not at all, Because in part they will not; there it must necessarily be only, Because they cannot, and therefore no fault.

This is the sum of what is here said: If there be a willing mind as to the prevailing degree, to obey every command, God will in mercy accept it to Salvation. But, was there a willing mind to any thing, so willing as to have nothing of unwillingness; God would not in this case account sin at all, nay though it was not done through some other hindrance. Those that would freely give if they had it without any unwillingness, it will not be sin they did not give.

You may see also by this (farther than I thought to have spoken) that we have the Natural power, though not of undoing the sins we have done: yet of unfinning actual obedience for the future; else we should
not

not sin in not performing perfect actual obedience; we onely want will: Which may much humble us, would we well consider it.

I shall Transcribe to you a passage out of Mr. *Ferners*'s Willfull Impenitency, which speaks as high as the most ingrateful expression I have used, *page 25*. "*Rom. 7. 18*. "I quote this place the rather (saith he) because many wrest it to their own destruction. O, sayes a wicked man, I have a good will, I would, as *Paul* sayes, but I cannot perform; Thus men misinterpret this place, for looke how far *Paul* would, he could perform: for the will hath *potentiam excentricam*, and an Imperative force over the man; what he did will, he did perform; he performed it in his heart, and tongue, and hand, &c. But he would draw his will forwarder than it was, but could not; his very will was partly unwilling: he could not indeed perform so much as he would; that is, he could not draw on his will so strongly as he would. His will was not perfectly sanctified; no Saint in this world hath any compleatness of will; and therefore his performance is not perfect, because his will is not perfect.

"I say, If thy will be converted to God, thou art Converted, obedience ever goes as far as the will: And therefore if thou art willing, it is certain thou art obedient,
" *Isa.*

“ *Isa. i. 19.* whosoever is willing to obey,
 “ that man does obey in some measure, be-
 “ cause the Will hath power of Execution,
 “ and the whole man at command. This is
 “ the reason why Divines say that, The since-
 “ rity of the will is the condition of the Gos-
 spel. Thus he, *verbatim*; and page 86.
 “ We never sin against the Gospel, but only
 “ upon *Will-nots*; indeed we sin against
 “ the Law in every of our Cannots. This
 last passage I confess I do contradict, and so
 I think he doth himself in the passage before-
 cited, and also in the following page 87.
*Conscience can never condemn us, but only up-
 on Will-nots.*

If any should yet be dubious and unsatis-
 fied, or contentious and quarrelsome, as
 indeed one may easily take occasions, the
 faculties of the Soul being such abstruse
 things;

I shall appeal to them though they object
 either on one hand, or on the other.

First, To those that should affirm a Natu-
 ral Impotency. First; Dare you think that
 God hath promised to men Salvation if they
 do, and will punish them if they do not,
 things they cannot do, if they would never
 so fain? (*etiamsi maxime velint.*) If so,
 Can you think that an Act of Mercy, and
 this of Justice? would not this be a punish-
 ment for no fault? Do you not say that the
 reason why a Deaf man is not bound by the
 command of hearing, or a Poor man of giv-
 ing,

ing, or the Fool by the command of understanding the Gospel, is, because they cannot do it, or else they would be bound by these general commands as others? Is not this to grant that Gods Laws oblige to obedience, only *quoad posse & nosse*, as Lawyers speak? Kerā rō
dīā dīā
dīā dīā
None can possibly evade here but by saying, as some do, It is true, such Impotent people are not obliged, and the consequence (that all are by the same reason exempted from doing what they cannot do) would be good, if this was the cause or reason why men are not obliged by such general Laws; but this is not the reason, but the reason is, Because God doth not require it of them, else the blind would be as much obliged to read, and the deaf to hear, &c. But I would ask one thus replying, such questions, How doth he know since the Law is general, that God doth not require the deaf to hear, &c. but by knowing this, that God doth not require men to do what they cannot do? Again, Do you think that if God or man should require things which we cannot do, that the Law would be as equal, as a Law requiring what man can do? and would the man be as much to blame in not doing, as if he could? And why doth not God require the deaf man to hear the Minister? is there no reason of it in the Nature of things? Suppose you should have read a Command in Scripture, requiring you to forget all injuries, Would not Natural reason, and the notion you have
of

of the injustice of requiring things impossible, dictate to you to interpret such a Scripture Metaphorically, To forgive all injuries? And would you not have given this as your reason of so interpreting the words, Because a man cannot forget a great injury if he would, hath not the Natural power of so doing, the Memory not being totally subject to the Will? A man may forgive, but cannot forget, who it was that injuriously lam'd him, or put out his eye. So also if a promise had been of a great reward, If we forget all injuries, would you not give this as your reason why you cannot interpret the words according to the first and properest sense of the word [Forget], because if you do, no thanks could be due for such a promise, it would not be gracious but lufurious.

Secondly : Did your hearts ever reproach you, as sinning in not doing that which you could not do, or omitting that you could not but omit? Tell me, or rather your selves, When and where, and for what, (I except Melancholy people out of this Appeal, for some of those I have known to have had great trouble of mind for things they could not help) yea though your Natural Impotency came from sin, as I think all Natural dulness of understanding, and blindness, and lameness of Body, do. Suppose you had lived in a place where you never heard of Christ and the Gospel, till you came to great years; And if as soon as you did

you

you had yielded to the Gospel, Do you think your hearts would have reproached you that you received Christ no sooner? I know you will answer, No. If I ask you why, I know you can give no answer but this, Because you could not; you wanted something that was Naturally necessary to enable you to that act, viz. an objective evidence. But do not your hearts reproach you for refusing him so long? you will say, Yea. Now you are very ignorant of right reasoning, if you cannot draw the conclusion.

Secondly, I appeal to those on the other Extream that should object against this Moral Impotency, as either that there is no such thing, or if there be that it would excuse.

First: Art thou as inclinable to good as evil, to please God as to please thy Flesh and Senses? Canst thou in this Moral sense obtain of thy self to chuse good and refuse evil? why then dost thou not? Why dost thou pray † him, to incline thy heart to his Testimonies? what need hast thou or any else of the Spirit's help? dost thou not see multitudes going on resolutely in wicked ways, notwithstanding all rebukes, engaging themselves more deeply against God and holiness, that thou thinkest, unless God work some wonderful way by his Spirit, they can never obtain of themselves to leave those ways they are wedded to, though nothing hinders but their own choyce? Again, Will you not grant that it may in some true sense

† See Answer well urging this, Ep. 107. ad Vitalem.

sense be said, That no man can live so innocently as not to need Christ's death for pardon of his Omissions and Commissions? Now consider, and you will find, that, while you allow, that no man sinneth in not doing the things he hath a Natural Impotency to, you can in no sense grant it true, while you deny this Moral Impotency, or deny it to be one kind or sort of Impotency.

Secondly: Thou goest on, or hast gone on, in such sins, as thy heart is privy unto, and couldst not of a long time obtain of thy self to leave such courses; Doth not thy Conscience tell thee, it would be just with God to Condemn thee; and with men (if great crimes) to punish thee for them? If a Thief, Robber, or Murtherer should say (and say true) I was so resolved, I could not obtain of my self for all the Laws of God and man to leave my wicked wayes, is this an excuse? Is he not justly yet punishable? wouldst not thou punish him if Judg? wouldst thou not do unworthily to let him escape upon this pretence, though true? whatever thou mayst say against this in words to confound; yet it appears plain, though against thy will; It is to dispute against the Sun's light, when we know it is so, though we cannot tell how. One may as well dispute against motion, as that Antient did, because so difficult to tell what it is. If he should puzzle you in saying, It was from my Pride and Covetousness, or Enmity and Hatred, that I could

could not obtain of my self to leave those courses; how could I help it but obey my Lusts? you are yet sure, this doth not excuse, and so are all Lawyers, yea and all men in the world; but this Impotency is of a different sort from that which doth excuse. The Will's hinderance by wicked habits, and the habits themselves, so far as sinful, are voluntary things. Covetousness cannot be an unwilling thing, or Pride, or Enmity; no man is an Enemy to another against his Will. Do not mis-interpret these words, I mean his whole will; else I know he may be an Enemy to a man, and Covetous against his will; when his will is divided, and partly for it, and partly against it upon contrary Reasons, as it is often even sensible in the best, though their darling, countenanced will and choice, is against it.

Let any man tell me (and I will impartially consider it, yea, I desire help here) what a Vertuous or Vitious habit is, as different or distinct from an inclination of the will, which is *appetitus totius suppositi*, the Appetite of the man, as other meerly sensitive inclinations are not, that do not λόγῳ μετέχοντες, that are not chosen upon reasons, as other appetitions or averasions are not.

If any man should have some sensitive Appetite altogether against his will, it would not be Covetousness, or Pride, or Intemperance; and if it should in some little degree draw his will to it, yet so far as it is against his

his will, it is without blame; and only so much, as it hath the consent of the will, or the will doth not dissent enough, he is culpable; so Enmity, if a man should have any particular averſation to another man or woman (like that, *Non amote, Sabidi*) that is not choſen upon any reaſon, and ſo is not voluntary at all, it would not be called Enmity univocally and properly. Vertuous and Vitious habits, are I think (I would not be over-confident where, for any thing I know, I go alone) only a continued confirmed inveterate inclination of the Will.

A man that hath choſen Riches to purſue them by all means direct or indirect as his end, wherein he places his felicity, is a Covetous man, and, continuing this choice, is habitually Covetous. Did he now chuſe God for his ultimate end, and conſtantly and reſolvedly will holineſs and the pleaſing of God, he would be habitually holy. If any ſhould have a Conception of ſuch habits, as things that are not volitions, or, which is all one, inclination of the will, but diſtinct from them *ſpecie*, and things that men could not put off if they would, it would be an erroneous Conception; for they would not then be Vertuous or Vitious; and God would not require the putting them off, and it would not be the duty of ſuch men to will what is good, if they could not, had not the Natural power, to will good, notwithſtanding ſuch habits. Therefore *Aristotle*, who
was

was a man *acute* to admiration in such things, seems to sleep, and forget what he had proved, That all Virtue and Vice is voluntary, *Ad Nicom. Lib. 3.* when he saith, ἐν οὐδενί τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή, καὶ αὖτις ἐξ ἑστέ, that is in effect, Vitious habits are not to be called voluntary in the ordinary sense; for, saith he, A Vicious man cannot if he would, ὅτι μὴν ἐὰν θε βούληται, do well, or otherwise than according to these habits.

I have told you the meaning of the Scripture; *he accustomed to do evil, cannot do well*: he can if he would; but he cannot Morally obtain of himself to Will it. But *Aristotle* saith, he cannot if he would: but he saith, Such habits are yet to be called ἐκείνοι, or voluntary, because those Acts were voluntary, whereby they brought them on themselves; and he brings this Instance to shew in what sense they are voluntary, When a man hath brought a Disease on himself by Intemperance, he may be said to be sick of a voluntary Disease, though he would fain be freed from it and cannot. Any one may see that, if the case was so, you could not call them vitious habits *formaliter*, and voluntary *formaliter* and properly: but only sinful and voluntary figuratively, originally, *effective*, as every punishment of sin is, because voluntary sins were the cause of them. If a man should say, I would not at all be Covetous, and chuse the world for my chief good, but I do chuse it; Would it not be a

Contradiction ? And if such a thing was possible, would it not be far from being sin and punishable ? You may see by this, that such habits are only this Moral Impotency, the wilfulness it self under another consideration.

If any should yet be unsatisfied, and think Vitious habits are not Elicited, but Imperated ; Let him reduce them to what notion he will, and it will come all to one for Argument : for he must then say of them, as of all other Imperate things, that they are subject to the will wholly, or so far as they are not, they are sinless, and that God doth not require us to put them off.

If you will have them *αλογα*, and meerly sensitive inclinations, then they are not Vitious any more than they are consented to, or not enough disliked ; As suppose you should call a great Thirst (brought upon a man by excessive drinking) Drunkenness. And again, either they take away the Natural power of Willing (*i.e.* make him no Rational Creature) and then they would excuse ; or they cause that a man cannot Will good if he would (pardon this Contradiction, for I speak it *docendi causa*) and this would excuse indeed. A thing impossible cannot be a Moral fault. Or they only hinder the effects of the Will, the Imperate acts; and then they so excuse, that God would accept his Will without those Imperate acts. But these would be irrational notions of Moral ha-

habits : for let any man consider, and he may easily see (I think) that they are not different *specie* from volitions, that is, inclinations of the Will, but comprehend in their notion, some kind of radication and continuance of volition, that we cannot well understand. Doubtless they are not a kin to other habits, which only enable the subject easily and dextrously to do the act ; for a good man could as easily and dextrously commit a sin as another man, but will not.

Now to let you see further a necessity of thus distinguishing, consider how the Ancients were, for want of this distinguishing, puzzled to answer the *fallacious* arguments for the *Pelagian ἀναμάρτεια*, or perfection in this life, (while yet the Orthodox Fathers held in the main as we ordinarily do, as may be made fully apparent). *Pelagius* maintained amongst his other errours, this, That a man in this life can keep the Law perfectly, and meant it Morally in the sense wherein I oppose it : his Arguments were these * which prove it only Naturally possible, *viz.* To deny a mans power to keep the Law perfectly is to accuse God of a double Ignorance, in not knowing our weakness, or in not knowing what he commands us ; or it is to accuse him of Injustice in commanding what man cannot do.

* Epist. Pelag. ad Demetriadem : Duplici ignorantia accusamus Deum, &c. Tom 4. Hieron. It is Pelagius his Epistle, though through the Ignorance of former times, placed with, and read amongst *Jerom's*, as B. *Usher* and others observe.

A Discourse of Natural

Or thus, as * *Critobulus* (by which feign'd name , *Jerom* represents

* Hierom lib. 1. advers. Pelag. Aut possibilia mandata Deus dedit aut impossibilia Si possibilia, in nostra potestate est, ea facere: Si impossibilia, nec in hoc rei sumus si non facimus quod non possumus. Ac per hoc, siue possibilia siue impossibilia Deus dedit mandata, potest homo sine peccato esse.

Pelagius , as by *Atticus* himself) formes the Argument; Either God hath given possible or impossible commands: If possible, it is in our power to keep them: if impossible, we sin not in not-doing them since we cannot: And so it follows that, whether

God have given commands possible or impossible, a man can live without sin.

Augustin (*Lib. 2. de peccat. merit. & remis. cap. 6.*) endeavours to answer this difficulty, and affirmed it as undoubted, that God commandeth no man any thing which he cannot do. Therefore he saith in Answer, that a man can live without sin through Grace and by Gods help. But this doth not answer the difficulty at all, unless he will affirm, that no man doth sin except God give him this Grace; that is, except God by his Grace make him that he doth not transgress the Law; which is in effect to say, Man doth not sin; except God make him actually not to sin, which would be to come to *Pelagius*, at the back-door, and to go beyond *Pelagius*, and hold, That it is impossible any man should sin at all.

Jerom endeavours to answer this, but more palpably spoys all for want of distinguishing.

guishing, He also maintains as undoubted amongst all Christians, That God commandeth nothing but what man can do, and yet maintaineth that no man can perfectly keep all the Commandements, which is good sense if we distinguish, but, without distinguishing, an express contradiction. But he trusts to this weak Evasion to save it (*Lib. I. adversus Pelag: Vides quod Deus possibilia jusserit, & tamen nullum posse, &c.*) His commands are possible (saith he going on) because some men can keep one part and some another of the commands, but yet none can keep all; and adds, therefore it is not the duty of single men to keep them all; and so God commands nothing but what we can do; But *Augustine* is express against this of *Jerom*, *Serm. 191. de Tempore* † and calls it Blasphemy, to say, that God commands any thing that men in particular cannot do, but only men in general.

† Execramur etiam blasphemiam eorum, qui dicunt

Impossibile aliquid homini a Deo esse præceptum, & mandata Dei non a singulis, sed ab omnibus in comuni posse servari.

Neither is there, I think, to be found one of the Ancients, accounted Orthodox, that doth maintain in the strict sense opposed, that God commandeth men what they cannot do, but all abhorred it as an opinion laying an high Accusation on God, till many hundred years after this age of *Augustin*:

* who
lived 700
years af-
ter this.
Serm. 2.
in vigil.
Rom.

But at last * *Bernard* being pressed with this difficulty, doth (yet any one may see unwillingly) fly to this, that God may command what man cannot do, and doth mean it of a Natural power. But he doth it in these words, God may command *nimis*, too much. And in giving his reason for it, he doth not fly to that, that men once had power, or that men think they have power, which it is likely he would have done, had he not thought them invalid; But he gives this reason for it, that God may command too much, even that which men cannot do, To humble them. But this is but a very defective humiliation that this can cause: for though it can cause grief and sorrow, and anger, that God should be so severe to require what we cannot do; yet it cannot cause Repentance; for it is essentially necessary to Repentance, that the man could have done otherwise. And yet for all this

* *Super*
Car.

Serm. 10.

* *Bernard* would fain compound the matter, and not say that God requires what men cannot do, and offers to deny it on this condition, that they will grant that men cannot do all that God requires, and saith he, Who dare arrogate to himself that which *Paul* had not attained? which is no Contradiction, though it be virtually to say, No man can do all that he can do, but good sense with the distinction I have explained. Yea, it is so obviously apparent, that a man's culpable Impotency only lyeth in his disability

lity to do that which he hath the Natural power to do, that I wonder it is no more taken notice of.

Councils are called against *Pelagius*, and make many worthy, pious determinations, but any one may see are perplexed what to say against *Pelagius* in this case; and all that was determined about this particular, was against affirming (which *Pelagius* had done) that any man lives so Innocently as to have no need to say, *forgive us our debts*. Yet they determine, that a man can, by the Grace of God, live without sin. And the *Orange Council* against *Pelagius* determines, that all Baptized ones, Christ helping and co-operating * can, and ought to fulfil all things necessary to Salvation, if they would labour faithfully. But any one may see, though these Councils meant well and Orthodoxly, as will appear to any perusing their determinations; yet the difficulty remains unanswered, and will do so for ever, without this Distinction. For they rightly maintained, as all the Ancient Fathers before them, that no man ought to do more than he can do; And therefore, without distinguishing, it cometh to all one for the answering the difficulty, whether the Grace they speak of be given, or not given. For suppose it be affirmed that this Grace is given to men, Then either they can obey perfectly, so as to need no pardon; and this they abhorred the affirming of; or if they cannot with this

*Council,
Milevit.
Palestine.*

*Arausi-
cum.*

* *Depent
& possunt.*

Grace given, obey perfectly, so as to have no need of pardon, or Christs satisfaction; then they are Innocent, and sin not. in not living perfectly, and so need no pardon in not obeying perfectly, it being no fault not to obey perfectly, since they Cannot obey perfectly. Again, suppose it be affirmed, that this grace is not given to men to obey perfectly, but only their meaning was, That God could, if he had so pleased, have given men such Grace as might inable them to live without sin, but did not. Then they were not bound to live without sin, and so were, or might be perfect still; As a man that is tyed by Sicknes to his Bed, can by the help and assistance of God, go to the Church, viz. *When God shall so raise him up*; yet till God do so first raise him up, he is not bound to go, needs no pardon for not going.

Therefore, when all is said, we must distinguish of man's Power and Impotency, so as we may truly say, A man can in one sense without Grace, obey perfectly, hath the Natural faculty and power to do it, or he could not be obliged to it by the Law; (the Law would be no law to him, no more than the general command of hearing the Word is a Law, or Obligatory to a man Deaf; and the effect of Grace, is not the giving this power, else we might say, A man could not sin unless God gave him Grace:) And also, that we may say truly; A man
can

cannot in another sense obey perfectly, nor do any good thing without Grace, viz. Morally; his Wickedness, his Unwillingness, which is Moral Impotency hindering. And every man understands this, though he know not how to express it, as you will perceive by asking any man, lamenting his Omissions or Commissions, whether he could not have avoided those sins, though God did not give him that Grace to avoid them eventually. When any man is lamenting his long refusal of Christ, he knoweth in some sense he could have done otherwise; God gave him help and power enough naturally-necessary (yea, few or rather none that enjoy the Gospel, but they can say *more than enough*, else he could not befool himself for thus refusing mercy; Though God did not give him Grace sooner to take away his resistance, and unwillingness, and so to cause him actually and eventually to turn from sin to God; and yet in some sense he could not do otherwise; God not giving him Grace sooner, that would eventually take away his unwillingness, and cause him actually to chuse Mercy on the terms of it.

I may add here, How this distinction doth wonderfully serve to reconcile the Doctrine of the Ancients to themselves, and

and one another, * All men versed in their

* They maintained not only that the Will was free from co-action, and force; but that it had a freedom from any Natural necessity of chusing or refusing. And it is apparent that where the will hath only a freedom from co-action; but not a Natural liberty of both chusing and refusing, e. g. As in willing the ultimate end, happiness; or Nilling it; It is not in such things capable of command or prohibition, and so not capable of Virtue or Vice, whatever some late School-men and others say.

in the second and third Century, did maintain free Will, as a foundation-principle of all Religion against the *Manichees* and other Hereticks, that denyed it, (and indeed the † following ages did

† *Ipsa ratio quemlibet nostrum querentem vehementer angustat, ne sic defendamus gratiam ut liberum arbitrium auferre videamur; rursus nec liberum arbitrium sic asseramus, ut superbâ impietate ingrati Dei gratiæ judicemur, Aug. lib. 2. de peccat. Merit. c. 18. Si non est Dei gratia, quomodo salvat mundum? Et, si non est liberum arbitrium; quomodo judicat mundum? Ep. 46. ad Valentin. Nihil tam in nostrâ potestate quam ipsa voluntas est. Voluntas nostra nec voluntas esset, nisi esset in nostrâ potestate; porro quia est in nostra potestate, libera est. Aug. de lib. arb. lib. 3. c. 2. Hieron. Ep. ad Cæsiphont. Frustra Blasphemias, & ignorantium auribus ingeris, Nos liberum arbitrium condemnare, damnetur ille qui damnat.*

writings, know and confess; that all the Fathers, and the whole Church (*nemine contradicente*) of the purest ages, next after the Apostles, after a Controversie was moved concerning it, as

also maintain it, whatever any say to the contrary.)

Now

Autor lib. Hypognoſticon (which was not Auſtin, but an Ancient writer againſt the Pelagians a little after Auſtin) ſaith, *Quisquis negaverit liberum arbitrium, Catholicus non eſt* Aug. lib. de Fid. cont. Manic. *Quis non clamet, Stultum eſſe præcep- dare ei, cui liberum non eſt quod præcipitur facere ? Et Iniquum eſſe eum damnare cui non fuit poteſtas juſſa complere.* But you ſhall find none of the Ancients ſaying, that it is unjuſt for God to require of men what their ſtubborn or morally inflexible wickedneſs of their Wills only hinders them from doing; or what they cannot find in their hearts to do; or what they are ſo wickedly bent not to do, that except God take away this reſiſtency of Will by his Grace, they will never do; which is the Moral or Wicked Impotency, I have explained.

Now it is a common answer of || learned men, that it is true, They did ſo, but yet their judgments herein are not much to be regarded, becauſe they (ſay they) contradict themſelves: For thoſe very Authors that lived before *Pelagius*, had not that occaſion to ſpeak largely and exactly of the neceſſity of Grace, none being ſo boldly wicked as to deny it, till he, (as *Vincentius Lirinensis* obſerves,) yet when they have occaſion, they ſpeak as high as any for the neceſſity of Grace, and of mens inſuperable wickedneſs, and how that without Chriſt, and his Spirit, and Grace, we can do nothing good: and of Gods working in us to will and to do of his good pleaſure.

|| *Centur. Magde- burg. Scultet. Medul. Pat.*

I grant it is apparent, that thoſe more Ancient Fathers, do generally, as is ſaid, thus

* You thus * speak, viz. of our Impotency to God, may find many occasional short expressions demonstrably to argue their judgments in this particular, against the Pelagian way, in these Authors following, though censured, as speaking too high for Free Will, and in almost any other of the Ancients before Pelagius, viz. *Just. Mart. Jerenaw. Tertul. Arnob. Cyp. Laſt. Aſhanaf. Baſil. Ambr.*

There are many learned men, pretend with great confidence, that this Distinguishing is to no purpose; and that men are not too blame, if there be any present Impotency at all on men to the immediate duty, be it what it will, or call it what you will, Willfulness, Wickedness, Moral Impotency, for, It will excuse, say they, as well as Natural; and therefore contend, that except God by his Grace give to men, over and beside their Natural power, some kind of *æquilibrium*, or equal-inclination of their Will to good and bad, they would not be too blame for disobeying the Gospel; this they call a second power, and it is the same they mean

mean by their Preventing and Subsequent Grace, as appears when they explain them, and they pretend that this Grace doth work; and that this is all that Grace doth work; for it doth not (say they) encline the Will any farther than by giving it a power to encline either way. Now I greatly dislike this Notion, and this also must either fall, or the notion of Moral Impotency, and what hath been said of it, falls; as not standing in any stead, but excusing as well as the Natural. I shall therefore search more narrowly into it, and also into what can be said any way, that I can think of, against what is here propounded.

I wish any Opposer was now here (for I would impartially know the truth) that would soberly tell me what he would have God do to wicked men, to make them without excuse, if he pretend that this is not enough for this end, that they have the Natural faculties, and promises, and threatenings, and providences afflicting or prosperous; that is an object intelligible, fitted and suited objectively to work this great change of heart and will;

I am confident such a one could only name these five things with any shew of reason; and he that can name a sixth, *erit mihi parvus Apollo*, would do more than ever was done yet.

First; I would have God give a man more of the Natural power and faculty of chusing

chusing good, and refusing evil, that he may be inexcusable. But this is irrational; He hath power of willing good, and if a third or fourth power, yea, if ten times as much power of willing good was given him, it would be all one; For this is no reason at all of his not willing good, because he hath not the Natural power to will it, else it would excuse; but he will not chuse it: And they that do chuse good, and refuse evil, have not more of this Natural faculty, are not more men, are not in this sense further from Natural fools than other men.

Secondly; Or I would have God give him more of the Gospel; send more Ministers, and awakening providences; yea, send some from the Dead. But this was well answered, They have *Moses* and the Prophets, that was enough to make them inexcusable, and these under the Gospel have more than so, more than the Old Testament.

Thirdly; I would have God to make them actually willing, that they may be inexcusable. But this is a contradiction, and it is to say, Wicked men and Devils do not sin, except God actually make them not to sin. And yet this is the meaning of such passages, or they are not sense; It doth not excuse for God to give the faculties of willing (which is the power of chusing it) except he give them also preventing Grace; that is, make them willing actually. Indeed when

all

all is said, you must say, or say worse, that, That Grace, concerning which the Controversie is, lyeth, in making men actually willing, as distinct from giving power of Willing, call it second or third power, or what you will, and the design of what I say here, is not to oppose this, but to prove it, as you will see in going on; but only I am shewing here that Gods denying of this, doth not excuse men, so as it can be said, they do not sin in not obeying the Gospel.

Or Fourthly: I would have him make them to be without Temptation to sin, that they may be without excuse: But will not your Servant be without excuse in Robbing you, unless he had no temptation to it: This is an unreasonable demand; it is enough that God promises a far greater good than that they deprive themselves of by obedience, and threatens a far greater evil to them sinning, than that they incur by their obedience. Would you have no self-denial in the World? Many obey God, that have greater temptations to disobedience in those things wherein they obey, than those have that disobey him in such things.

Fifthly; Or I would have God make them less actually unwilling to good, and take off from them much of this Moral Impotency, or chosen resolvedness to go on in sinfull wayes (which is in part to sanctifie them, and to make them in part actually willing to deny themselves, as any one may easily

easily understand) and then they will be too blame , and be guilty of sin if they obey not.

First ; Suppose God do not this (as we are certain he doth not to all) yet are not you and all men in the world sure, This doth not excuse ? Else the most incorrigible and wilful offenders would be most sinless and excusable. Can any man in earnest say that a man is not bound to leave his evil wayes, and that he doth not sin in going on in them, while he is fully and peremptorily resolved to go on in them ? Yet this seemeth apparently to be the meaning of many learned men in pleading for an indifferancy of Will.

Secondly ; What way is there possible to cause a man to leave off this wilfulness, to put off this Vicious habit, which he hath the Natural power to put off if he would, that is threatned enough, and promised enough, but some way moving a volition, by some way causing him to desire the good, and dislike the evil ?

If you shall say, I would have him take away the Vicious habits, you hide your meaning in obscure words, or you mean, I would have him not only give him the power of willing the contrary, which he hath ; but also some way make his Will encline to the other way, that he may be inexcusable.

Thirdly ; Do not you use to Object, that this would be to destroy the freedom of

mans will, and so his humane Nature, to cause the volition any other way than by giving the power of Willing? For if God may, by his Spirit, in some way to us unknown, distinct from meerly propounding the object (which he doth where the Gospel is preached without difference) without destroying mans freedom, take away in part mans great Wilfulness or Unwillingness to good; why may he not quite and totally (or however to the prevailing degree) take away thus, by his Spirit, his Unwillingness to Good, and cause a man to Will or chuse Good, without destroying his Freedom?

Do not now put this all off with these common words unexplained (which distinction may have a good sense, if rightly explained), viz: God giveth all men Preventing Grace, else they would be in no fault, and upon their right use of that, he giveth them Subsequent Grace. I will shew you that these words do but hide your meaning; and that by the subsequent, you mean no more than by your preventing Grace, and by preventing Grace, no more then the faculty or power of willing and obeying, if one would; you make the subsequent Grace to be given only *ex hypothesi*, upon the supposition men use the preventing well. Consider therefore a little, that you call preventing Grace, whether is this the same with some of those things before-mentioned, or some thing

distinct? Whether is this preventing Grace any more than Gods general, providential Act of making men Naturally perfect, giving men the power or faculty of chusing Good and Evil, and so leaving them to their meer self-determination? If not, it is no more than giving the faculties, which is rather to be called giving * Nature, than Grace. If you say (as some do, and then unsay it again) this preventing Grace doth more, for it doth excite and move.

* *Posse habere fidem & Charitatem naturæ est hominum :*

habere autem gratiæ fidelium. Aug. de præd. Sanct. cap. 5.

Let me ask, Doth it excite and move potentially only, or actually and really? you will, it may be, say, Actually; for to say only potentially is a contradiction, and is no more than it doth not, but it would move if it was not hindred (which I shall after take notice of) therefore you will say, It doth actually move and excite. Now what doth it move and excite but the Will? And what is that but to cause actual Willing? If it excite motion, there is no motion of the Will but willing and nilling, consenting or dissenting, liking of the thing it is moved to or disliking; and it doth not move nilling dissent or dislike of the good; if it really move and excite, it doth not move nothing, this would be to cause a standing motion So that this, if granted, is to grant that God doth not meerly give power by it to the will

will to move it self, but doth, over and above this, move the Will, which you so much dread. If you shall say (as I know you will at last) *mover, sed nihil promover*, this doth move the Will, make men willing actually, only on condition they consent, be willing and obey, and use it well.

First; This is a weak manner of speaking: It is to say it maketh men willing on condition they be willing, or not unwilling; that is, on condition they have no need of it, and that the work be done before it come.

Secondly; This is to run them both into one, and make the preventing Grace the same with the subsequent. Thirdly; Yea, this is to deny all but the common Grace of giving the faculties (if it be proper to call it Grace) and the Gospel.

Now to speak of the subsequent Grace. If a man use this preventing Grace well, will the subsequent certainly follow? You say, yea. Which of those things above named doth this belong to? Will this subsequent grace only give them power of willing Good, or make them actually to will it? If it only give them power to chuse the good, this is the Natural faculty. Doth it also make them actually willing? you will say, That cannot be the proper use of this, for they are actually willing before; else they could not have used the preventing Grace well. Therefore you will say, this is to make them continue and persevere, and

grow in actual willingness. But, will this keep them actually willing? You will say, No; not unless they continue using this Grace right, and that they do not, except they continue actually willing to use it aright: That is, it will make them persevere in chusing Good, and refusing the Evil, on condition they do persevere chusing the Good and refusing the Evil; that is, on condition they have no need of it. And your subsequent Grace is also no more than giving the faculty and power, and the same with your preventing Grace. And so the total amounts to no more than this, If they improve that free-Will, without which they cannot be men, they shall be men still while they live. You may apply what is here spoken to any effect that can be assigned to this Grace (while they will maintain only general Grace) as taking away resistance, and unwillingness to Good; or causing a man to pray and seek after God. I am ashamed thus to represent to you that which is the Grace, that some other-wise Learned and Reverend men will only grant beside giving the Gospel.

Nos autem dicimus humanam voluntatem sic divinis adjuvari ad faciendum iustitiam, ut præter quod creatus est homo cum libero arbitrio; præterque doctrinam quæ ei præcipitur quemadmodum vivere debet, accipiat Spiritum Sanctum &c. Aug. de Spir. & litt. cap. 3.

And by the way let me wish such as make this Objection, to take heed for all the specious fair shew it hath, viz. This, That it would destroy our

humanity for God to move mans Will, any other way than by giving him power to Will. For a man that should keep to this as his opinion, may be easily forced, by dint of Argument, against his Will, to affirme, that the holy Spirit doth nothing in the first Conversion, or carrying on the work of Grace after; beside barely propound the object, which is done by the meer preaching of the Gospel; and also give the faculties or Natural power.

Now if you should hold this tenent, that God doth no more for any than thus, I do freely grant that some of those inconveniences that many have endeavoured to ascribe to this opinion, would not follow from it; (he that endeavours to confute one errour with another, which is too common, doth ordinarily confirm his Antagonist in his error): as for Example, it would not follow, that a man would be the proper cause of his own Justification and Salvation, and that he was not beholden to God for them; and to speak ingenuously, you do well enough answer this Accusation. We cannot say properly, a Fellow that readeth, pardoned himself, or saved himself; but the Legislators upon his reading, pardoned him; yea *adequately*, though the Legislators did no ways cause him to read. But these things will follow unavoidably.

* First; It would be impossible for a man that

Per quorum disputationem suadet ut nec orare debeamus, non quia hoc audent aperte dicere, sed eorum sententiam, velint nolint, sequitur, Aug. Epist.

143. ad. Anast.

Cur petitur, quod ad nostram pertinet potestatem, si Deus non adjuvat voluntatem? Aug. de grat. Chr. Lib. 1. c. 15.

Quis optat, quod in potestate sic habet, ut ad faciendum nulli indigeat adiumento? Aug. de peccat. merit. & remis. Lib. 2. c. 6.

should hold this practically to pray for such things as these following seriously.

First, For grace and Holiness, and that God would encline his heart to his Testimonies; because he holds that God cannot with Justice and Honour, without a culpable respecting of Persons, and without destroying mans Nature, do any more than give him the power, and leave it meerly to himself to make use of it. He can only pray God would

give him power to make use of it if he will, and give him the Gospel; but not that God would Act any further to make him willing and to make him to obey. It is to say, Give me but power to obey, and let me alone for willing and obeying; Give but Talents, and let me alone for using them. I do not beg any more, for it would be to destroy my Humanity, and dishonour thee to give any more.

Second-

Secondly; Neither can he pray for continuance of Grace, or to be kept from Apostacy; he cannot pray as *David*, *Keep this in the thoughts of our hearts for ever, and confirm our hearts unto thee*; so as to mean any more, than that God would cause him to persevere, only if he do persevere; that is, if he shall remain constantly willing; but cannot pray that God would preserve him from willing to forsake him, and to cleave to the world; that God would so irradiate his mind with the danger of loosing all that is dear to him, and so confirm his resolution, and habituate his choice, that he may not be able morally to obtain of himself to forsake God, because he holds that this God will by no means do. And he that cannot pray thus, whatever Prayers he may say beside, must necessarily live very carelessly, or very uncomfortably wanting an humble, fiducial confidence in God, to keep him from degenerating, or, which is worse, he must be very Proud, and have such confident thoughts of his own heart and will's goodness and constancy, that he dare lay a greater wager on

Quando ergo rogavit Christus ne fides Petri deficeret, Quid aliud rogavit nisi ut haberet in fide liberrimam, inviolissimam & perseverantissimam voluntatem. Ang. lib. de corrupt. & grat. cap. 8.

Est quippe in nobis per hanc Dei gratiam in bono recipiendi & perseveranter tenendo, non solum posse quod volumus, verum etiam velle quod possumus. Subventum est igitur infirmitati voluntatis humane, ut divinâ gratiâ indeclinabiliter, & in suberrabiliter ageretur & ideo quamvis infirma, non tamen deficeret, neque adversitate aliquâ vinceretur. ibid. cap. 11.

his own head and heart, that if he have but a Natural power of Willing, be but continued a man, he shall do well enough for Willing. As for example, you have seen my judgment; Now this being my judgment, I must acknowledg that I cannot

† Whoſoever is born of God, cannot ſin; not that he hath not a Natural power to ſin, but he hath not a Will, a mind to ſin. Mr. Caryl on Job. Laſt Volum. Pg. 54.

pray that God would take away my † Natural power of willing Evil, of ſinning, and finally falling away, and conſequently of being undone for ever; for this would be to deſtroy my faculties, and make me no Man, as you ſee by that I have ſaid. But I

can pray that he would ſo work in me by his Spirit (in ſuch a way agreeable to my humanity, as he underſtands and I do not) that I may have that Moral rectitude of Will, which is oppoſite to that Moral Impotency I have ſpoken of; that I may not be able to obtain, of my ſelf, to leave off to be Wiſe and to be Good, and to turn from the way of Righteouſneſs; but may ſay with *Joſeph*, how can I do this Evil? and I am ſure (what ever any ſhould object, of this deſtroying my will, and making me a beaſt, and not a Rational Creature, and that it would be rather God's willing it in me, than my willing it) this would perfect my will; unleſs we can ſay, Saints in

Hea-

Heaven will be no men, and † Christ on † Aug. de
Earth was no man, and that it is not the *pred.*
Saints in Heaven love God, but God in *Sanct. lib:*
them loves God. *I. c. 17.*

Speaking
of

Christ's free Will, *An ideo in illo non libera voluntas erat, ac non
tanto magis erat, quanto magis peccato servire non poterat?*

Thirdly; He cannot pray that God
would make the Gospel pre-
vail effectually in the world;
or in his Congregation, if a
Minister; he cannot pray
after his Preaching, when
he hath Sown, and Planted,
and Watered, that God
would give the increase; nor
can he Pray for such things
for his Relations, but must
mean no more than this;
that God would give them
that free VWill which they
have already, and all men
besides, even the Natural
powers, and that they may
be able to obey the Gospel
if they will.

*Destruunt orationes quas
facit ecclesia, sive pro infi-
delibus & Doctrina Dei re-
sistentibus, ut convertantur
ad Deum: Sive pro fide-
libus, ut augeatur eis fides,
& perseverent in ea. Aug.
Hæres. 88.*

*Si fides est tantummodo
liberi arbitrij, nec daturâ
Deo, propter quod pro iis qui
nolunt credere oramus ut
credant? Quod prorsus fa-
ceremus inaniter, nisi rectis-
sime crederemus etiam pe-
versas, & fidei contrarias
voluntates. Omnipotentem
Deum ad credendum posse
convertere. Aug. lib. de
grat. & lib. Arb.*

And by the way, neither can they pray
very earnestly for this power or ability to
obey the Gospel (which it is granted they
may pray as earnestly for, as a man may
pray

pray that God would not deprive him of the right Natural use of his faculties of understanding and will) to be given, or continued to themselves or others, since they (*viz.* that maintain this power is all that the Grace of the Holy Ghost gives) hold, they cannot sin, or be guilty, or inexcusable in not obeying the Gospel without this power, and so could not be condemned for not obeying the Gospel if God denied it them; especially also considering they must hold consequently to this principle, that God is bound in Natural justice, either to give this power, whether they Pray or Pray not for it, or not to condemn them for not obeying the Gospel, because God will not do unjustly, whether men Pray or Pray not. Yea further, since it may well be questioned, whether it be lawful to Pray God to do that which he is bound by Natural equity and justice to do, (though I confess it is otherwise when only bound by promise) or not to do that which he is bound by Natural justice not to do; It is therefore questionable, whether it can be maintained lawful, according to the principles of those that hold that the only effect of Grace in dispute, is giving that power, without which men could not sin, or (which is all one) be inexcusable in not obeying the Gospel, to Pray God to give themselves or others that which they hold is the only effect of this Grace. (*viz.* this power of obeying the
 God

Gospel) for this end; viz. for this, That they may not be condemned for disobeying it; since he could not, as they say, in justice so condemn them if he gave them not this power. And further, Such as hold that the only effect of this, comonly called the Grace of the Holy Spirit; or commonly called subjective and internal Grace (different from the objective and external Grace, consisting in giving and promulgating the Gospel, and external providences, prosperous or afflictive; objectively fitted and suited to cause Obedience to the Gospel, (concerning which objective take notice I do not speak, nor move any Controversy) is only the giving that power to obey the Gospel, without which they could not be too blame, or inexcusable, or condemned for not obeying it; I say such as these can give but very cold and heartless thanks for Grace, causing them to obey the Gospel, comparatively to the thanks they of other apprehensions can give. But this on the By, for I am now only professedly speaking of these things in the sense wherein they cannot, as not pray at all, so neither praise God at all for them; which now I return to again.

Secondly; He cannot praise God for such things named before, as being done by God, if he hold they are not; he cannot say Cordially what the Pharisee is

re-

represented speaking with his lips; *God I thank thee, I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* I would not wrong any, I

* *Prorsus non gratias Deo agimus, sed nos agere fingimus, si unde illi gratias agimus, ipsum facere non putamus,* Aug. Epist. 107. adlem.

mean he cannot say this heartily, except he mean no more than this; *I thank thee thou didst as much for me as for these men;* but that I differ from them in these respects, I had the power indeed from thee as they had; but, that *I* used it bet-

ter than they, *I* owe to my self free Will. Whereas using this common Grace is surely the chief, prime matter. Oh but he received this power from *God* to use it? It is true; but yet a man that knoweth he hath done some good thing, or avoided Evil more than others; if he be of this opinion, he accounts it was not therefore done by him; as, because he received more from *God* than others, in the same circumstances with him; but holds that he owes nothing here for any special *Grace* or help from *God*; for though that which *God* did for him was the cause, according to his *Hypothesis*, of his goodness, & differing, taken absolutely, yet not at all taken comparatively in the sense now in hand; it was no cause of the difference taken as a difference: take this instance, *Two men had equal great stocks given them, one increaseth his estate, the other prodigallizeth all away, if the* reason

reason be asked absolutely, How one of them cometh to such a great Estate, far greater than the other, *the Stock given was a cause, and so thanks are due to him that gave it*; but if the reason be asked comparatively, why he differeth from the other, he owes that to himself, and his good Husbandry, and not to him that gave him the Stock, no thanks is due here at all in this sense; for this was no cause of, and so no thanks due for his differing taken comparatively, and not absolutely, in which sense I am now speaking. And then if God did afterward do great things for a man, give him subsequent Grace (be it what it will) it was not from any peculiar favour or good pleasure without respect to any thing in him, but because he used the preventing general Grace (be it what it will) rightly, which others had in as great a measure as he, and did not. So if a man have fearfully declined from his wonted integrity, and is after recovered; he cannot thank God for this, as coming from any special Grace (if he hold that God doth not, because he cannot, without unjust *προσέπολην δὲ* give *imparia paribus*) but holds, God did no more to recover him, than to others, going yet on in such degeneracy; whereas others can say, if they were more noble, like the

the Bereans, *Acts* 17. 11. better tempered and more ingenuious than those of *Thessalonica*, so as to receive the

Solet dici, Ideo credere meruit, quia vir bonus erat antequam crederet: Quod de Cornelio dici potest, cujus acceptæ sunt Elcemosynæ & audita orationes antequam credidisset in Christum; nec tamen sine aliquâ fide donebat & orabat: nam quomodo invocabat in quem non crediderat? &c. Quicquid igitur, & antequam in Christum crederet, & cum crederet, & cum credidisset, bene operatus est Cornelius, totum Deo datum est, ne forte quis extollatur, Aug. lib. de præd. sanct. c. 7.

Gospel when others refused it, that this readiness of mind to comply with the Gospel, was from some special Grace of God vouchsafed to them, that was not to others, like that Grace that opened *Lydia's* heart. And these can also say, that though they have the Natural power of willing and doing good, or God would not require it of them; yet such is the wicked wilfulness of their hearts, they could not morally obtain of themselves to will and do a-

ny good, or avoid any evil, but for this Grace and help of the Spirit; which yet helpeth them (they are sure, though they know not how, it may be, to answer all difficulties) in a way suitable to keep up their greatest care and diligence, and ordinarily only gradually, and in the serious and diligent use of means, And whatever God may do, or hath done more arbitrarily in being found so far of some that seek him, not as to make them seek him; (else the worser sort of men would always continue the worst, or if recovered, might ascribe it so to themselves,

selves, as not to any special Grace, which might justly have been denyed them, and was denyed others of like equal demerits) yet they do not, yea, account it would be their hainous sin, and a deserved forfeiture of this Grace, to expect it any other way. Let intellegent men reflect back & consider, whether all these ill Consequences will not equally follow from the opinion of *Aequilibrium*, which it is pretended Grace giveth, distinct from *liberum Arbitrium*; while it is said to be given to all alike, and that God will do no more; yea, whether it be possible any way to avoid these inconveniences while men deny the whole design and substance, (though some may express such things less conveniently) of those passages in the reformed Churches Confessions, concerning Election and special Grace. I had rather that you gathered it of your selves, than that I should shew it more plain. I could shew you many other fearful Consequences from this Opinion: but I, designing brevity, forbear it as needless, considering all formes of Prayer Ancient and Modern, and the whole current of Scripture concerning mans disability, and need of the Spirit's help, laugh this Opinion to scorn; and considering this Opinion was abhorred and spewed out as Poyson by the ancient Church, as soon as set abroad by *Pelagius*, and offered to, and tasted by her; and it is also professed to be abhorred; and is, I hope,

hope, however practically, by those that yet oppose the motion of the Will by this Grace any other way, than by giving to all men a power of self-determination upon this evasion and pretence, that such a power of self-determination is given by Grace, distinct from, and over and above, that which is essentially necessary to a sound man, and therefore, say they, in this we differ from *Pelagius*, and upon this account they deny it, because to do any more than to give such a power would be (say they) to destroy our humanity. Both which are meer assertions without any cogent shew of proof that ever I could see, and the contrary is easily proved.

Let us Remember we are but men, and *God's* actings are above our reach, yea, our own Souls-acts are so too. But *God* well understands his own actings and ours also; and what well consists withour freedom and faculties, and what not, which may content us. Surely that man never studied such things, that shall pretend he can satisfactorily decide all those School-difficulties about our Understanding and Will, wherein there seems to be demonstrative proof on both sides. *God* hath given us knowledg enough of our Souls for use, but not to satisfie our curiosity. I confess I cannot comprehend the holy Spirit's way of making men willing of unwilling in the first, or after, or continued Conversion. And I think it folly for me

me to attempt it that understand my own Soul's action so little. Yet, I think I can prove (so, as it cannot be answered by man) that this working on the Will is only *mediante intellectu* (or, which is all one, and yet avoids the disputes of faculties differing, *mediante ratione*) i. e. only by setting fast upon men the apprehensions of the good of the one way, and evil of the other; by so irradiating the Understanding with reasons, as to cause this choyce: and the * Scripture seems to run much this way. But I dare not yet say, I am sure it is only this way, though I strongly incline to it, and think I could answer what can be opposed. But then how he setteth home truth thus in Evidence, how he thus irradiateth the understanding; by what act distinct from the naked propounding the Truth and Gospel; what this demonstration of the Spirit is, I do not understand, and dare not so much as pray to God to tell me; I know it is too high for me, yea, or any man in this lower world. But yet, sure I am, First, something he doth, yea, a noble operative, something in those gracious effects on the Soul, beside giving us our Natural faculties, and the Gospel to make us willing. And Secondly, that it is something well consistent with mans humanity, and the freedom of mans will.

* Jo. 6.
44, 45.
1 Thes. 4.
9.
Ephe. 1.
17, 18,
19.
2 Cor. 4.
4.
1 Cor. 2.
4, 6.

See this more fully spoken to in my Book, called the Great Prophecy.

And Thirdly, That it shall not * actually be prevailingly resisted to the end, by such and such particular persons, known only to God; and so they shall not be able Morally to obtain of themselves finally to resist it; that is, they will not, though they can in the ordinary Sense. And

* *God in converting men, taketh not from them the Natural created power of Nilling, purum¹⁰ posse nolle, Christo contrahente; but he taketh away the Moral, Wicked & Godless power, & Vicious and Corrupt dispositions of resisting.* Rutherford, *Christ dying*, p. 314.

Fourthly, What he doth in time, he intended to do from Eternity. And Fifthly, That it is something God needed not, was not bound in justice to have done, to

make men inexcusable in not obeying the Gospel; whereas it is necessary, in justice, to make men inexcusable in not obeying, That they be endowed with the Natural faculties and power of understanding and willing; *i. e.* that they be not Fools and Children that have not power and knowledg to chose the Good and refuse the Evil. And also that they have a suitable objective evidence propounded, which they could understand if they would; that is, that they could obey it if they would, though this distinct help of the Spirit that actually causeth to will, be not given them; else they would be excusable and without blame if it had not been given them. And Sixthly, That
this

this something, and all that is here spoken is well consistent (whether we can understand it is so *, or not) with the greatest hopeful encouragement of certainty of Salvation to all mens sincere desires and diligent endeavours, & with the greatest discouraging danger to all negligence; And that it would be as really destructive to true Religion, and consequently damnable to hold an opinion of such endeavours not being necessary to, & not certainly attaining *Salvation*; or the neglect of them not undoing; (I mean to hold it finally & practically) as the grossest *Pelagianism* held thus practically would be. And Objections here are very inconsiderable. It may be made plain to men of competent rational parts for such things, that Gods knowing from Eternity what men will do in the variety of Circumstances, is no more inconsistent with mans freedom, and no more difficult to be answered and reconciled, than Gods knowing the week or day before, what a free agent will do, would be inconsistent with his freedom and liberty: and it is no more difficult to answer any

† Say with St. Austin.
*Queris tu rationem, ego
expavescam altitudinem;
tu ratiocinare, ego cre-
dam.*

*Nunquid ideo negan-
dum est quod apertum est,
quia comprehendere non po-
test quod occultum est?*
Aug. lib. de persev.
bon cap. 14.

*Illi dicunt, Ut quid ro-
gamus Deum ne vinca-
mur tentatione, quod in
nostra potestate est? Isti di-
cunt, Ut quid conamur be-
ne vivere, quod in Dei est
potestate? O Domine, O
Pater, qui es in cælis, ne
nos inferas in quamlibet
istarum tentationum, sed
libera nos a malo. Aug.
Hom. 53. in Johan.*

objection made from Gods fore-knowledg, than it is to answer the same argument against mans freedom, drawn from that undoubted *maxim*, *Quicquid est, quando est, necesse est esse*, the same answer equally serving both. As for example: If one should object thus against mans liberty to act and not act, to will and not will; He hath power both to will and not will such good, either before he actually wills it, or when he actually wills it; not before he actually wills it, for then he doth not will it; and when he doth not will it, it is impossible he should will it: not when he actually wills it; for then he doth actually will it; and when he doth not will it, it is impossible but he should actually will it; and therefore no man can have freedom of will, to will and not will at any time.

This fallacious Argument may be so urged, that it is impossible to give any answer but this, That this impossibility *ex hypothesi*, is not at all inconsistent with mans liberty, because it is an impossibility posteriour to, or after the acting or not acting, in order of Nature. So the same may be here truly answered, that, The infallible fore-knowledg of future free Agents actions, is no way inconsistent with the freedom and liberty of such actions; this fore-knowledg being after the said actions in
or-

order of Nature, and *existendi consequentiâ*.

He fore-knew it * because the free Agent * *οὐ γὰρ*
would do it, and not on the contrary the *ἐπεὶ*
free Agent would do it, because he fore- *γινώσκει,*
knew it. *γίνεται*
ἀλλ', ἐπεὶ
ἔμελλε

γίνεται, ἔγινώσκει. Origen Philocal cap. 23. *Quo circa nulla negotio cogimur; aut, retentiâ præscientiâ Dei, tollere voluntatis arbitrium aut, retento voluntatis arbitrio, Deum quod nefas est, negare præscium futurorum, sed utrumque amplectimur, &c.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 5. cap. 10.

And if any should take occasion hence, to harden their hearts in the neglect of Gods means of Salvation, and so perish, how easily will God hereafter confute a man making such an objection; Is it not fit that a heart-searcher, and one that knows what men will do, one that knoweth our thoughts long before, should rule the world?

And the only, possible, seemingly-unanswerable difficulty that I can call to mind, that is urged with colour of reason, and that it concerns us to answer to justify God, is this, of such particular mens obedience, being not commendable and rewardable. But how can we make such an objection, when we know not certainly what it is that God doth, no more then *Elisha* did what *Elijah* had done to him, beside the casting the Mantle over him, 1 *King.* 19. 19, 20. when he said, *What have I done to thee? to hinder*

thee from going home? And yet something God hath done to some, that they must follow him, and cannot (in a right sense) refuse or leave off as others do, to follow him, though they cannot tell what he hath done.

† *Quid opus est, ut affirmemur, vel negemur, vel definiantur cum discrimine, quæ sine discrimine nesciuntur.* Aug. Enchir. ad Laux.

And suppose a man make such † Hypotheses as these following, to maintain Election and special Grace; how will such Objections vanish, as having no colour or appearance before them? Suppose that one should maintain, that Gods Spirit doth only use in conversion the same Grace and operation *specie*, the same in kind, and only so much more of it in degree, as he by his omniscience knoweth will prevail actually; I

† *Vocatio alta & secreta qua fit ut legi atq; doctrina accomoderetur assensum,* Aug. Ep. 107.

say, so much † higher than that whereby he restraineth wicked men from some particular sins; and whereby he sometimes keepeth their greater concernments on

their minds against their wills, and almost overcometh them to the obedience of Faith.

Why is not this commendable and reward-
Quid nobis est in vestigare

ea quæ neque scire compendium, neque ignorare detrimentum est ullum? Remitte hæc Deo, atq; ipsum scire concede. Vestris non est liberum rationibus implicare vos talibus, & tam remotos inutiliter curare res: vestra in ancipiti sita est salus animarum vestrarum, & nisi vos applicetis, &c. Arnob. adv. Gentes.

able in these that turn, as well as it would have been in the other to have turned? The degree cannot alter the species; so that at most you can but say, *It would be less commendable, and yet I could say something to oppose this, but will not, for I am not careful to keep up their over-great honour.* Yea, suppose he doth something less in degree than he doth to some continuing wicked, that are made to tremble like *Felix*, & only continueth this striving with them longer, even so long as he certainly knows by his omniscience will prevail with them; yea, suppose he have so restrained some by his gracious operations, that they have not so much as others, made it their interest to oppose the work of Grace; or begins with some betimes, before they are so resolved to go on in their sinful ways, as some hardened sinners; and then useth less of that, we know not what of the gracious operation of his Spirit, even so much as would not prevail with more hardened customary sinners, but yet more than he doth to others in equal degree of tenderness with them, and so much as he knows will prevail with these. Why is not the Turning of such commendable and rewardable? why doth this destroy their humanity and freedom? what, because God knew that in the Moral sense explained, they could not obtain of themselves to refuse to yeild to such drawing? Suppose

pose God had not known it, it would then (you will grant if this be the reason) have been commendable, and his knowledg doth not alter the nature of things. Why may we not as well say, it would hinder it from being culpable and punishable; for a man to sin, when he cannot find in his heart to do otherwise, though he hath the Natural power of doing otherwise (which I have shewed is apparently false) as say it would hinder an act from being commendable and rewardable, for God so to work by his Spirit, that a man cannot find in his heart, cannot Morally obtain of himself, to reject Christ and Mercy offered on such easie and reasonable terms, while he hath the Natural power of rejecting them, and so of eternally undoing himself. Suppose again, another should maintain that God doth something for the Conversion of all the Elect, different *specie* from what he doth to any others, representing in an extraordinary way for kind, something to their mind like the Angel with the drawn sword to *Balaam*, to turn them when set forward in an evil way; or something like the shining light about, and the voyce unto, *Paul*. How will you prove that it would not be commendable or rewardable in them to be moved by it? Do you think that *Pauls* turning from persecuting Christianity to it, was not commendable? *Paul* mentions it as well done

done of him, that he consulted not with flesh and blood, but obeyed. And what wrong would this be to others; whilst God doth enough for them; yea more then enough, did they not wilfully resist it and oppose it? Suppose God had not done more for any, would they then have been inexcusable in not turning from sin to God? How then can this be possibly conceived to detract from their inexcuseableness?

And for any other difficulties whatsoever, it may be made apparent to any intelligent opposer, that they will no more encumber a man here, than they will in that difficult providence of giving and denying the Gospel. And to make this out, consider these things. First, You use to urge these Scriptures following, so as some think you build too much upon them, being not improbably hyperbolical, *Ezek. 3. 4, 5, 6, 7. Get thee to the House of Israel, and speak my words unto them, for thou art not sent unto a people of a hard language (i. e. to the Gentiles): Surely had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkned, but the House of Israel will not hearken. Mat. 11. 21. If the mighty works which were done among you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have Repented. So Mat. 12. 14.*

Secondly, Consider, this was denied some places, that it is said, had it been given them, they would have Repented.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You grant that multitudes are ordinarily saved, where the Scripture-light of the Gospel cometh, that would have perished had it not come : and that God dealt, and dealeth not with every Nation for their Salvation in so high a degree as with the former Jews, and them that enjoy the Gospel.

Fourthly, You constantly grant, and it is express from Scripture, that God knew they would not Repent to whom he sent such high means.

Fifthly, You affirm, God did not, sometimes, send the Gospel to such places where he knew, had he done for them, as those others that Repented not, they would have Repented. This is necessary as a foundation-truth of your Fabrick. And I for my part, freely grant that a man may say, If God had not given me such clear means as he denyed others, I had perished. And I dare not deny but that that height of means internal and external, which he useth with some, and yet it prevaileth not, would have prevailed with others, that more common Grace hath restrained and prepared.

Sixthly, God fore-knoweth it will prevail with all such, with whom it will actually prevail ; this you readily grant.

Now there is as much granted in these your constant Confessions as I have said, viz. that God doth that in order to their Salvation,

on, for some, yea for multitudes, which he knoweth will prevail with them, that he doth not for others. Only I add this, And that without respect to any good thing in them. Now a man must be either very weak, not to see it, or very wilfull, not to grant it, That all the odious consequences that can be pretended to be fastned on the Doctrine of special Grace delivered by me, may as truly be charged on that which you grant and maintain, except this be true, That this denying of the Gospel is only to those that are worse then any that enjoy it. Which now cometh to be tried.

That learned worthy man answered Mr. Perkins thus, about this thing (and others of his mind generally follow him in it) Thus, *ad predestinationis & gratie singularitatem adstruendam, non magnopere servit. Isthoc, eo quod illi contra quos disputas, etiam supposita illius veritate, duplici tibi occurrent ratione, &c.* that is, There may two things be answered here to avoid special Grace, and consequently special Election, which follow thus,

First, saith he, the Reason why any are deprived of the Revelation of the Gospel, is because their parents, or Ancestors, rejected it (he means more than any other that enjoy it, or else it would be, as any one may perceive, weak Impertinency;) Now, to say nothing of the inconsistency of this, with
other

other his principles, and how this would not avoid the force, if true, I answer, This is apparently not true. I will bring but one instance instead of many; How many Infants have been secretly stolen away, or by force and Armes taken away from Christian Parents, and carried away, and Educated in dark Countries, though their Parents were far from rejecting the Gospel, or however far from rejecting it more than others, whose Children enjoyed it? And lest you should reply yet, Some of their *atavi* or *trivavi*, their higher Ancestors, were greatly guilty this way, I will suppose these very Parents had more Infant Children not carryed away, and so all the same Ancestors.

Secondly; Or saith he, they made themselves unworthy (he meaneth more unworthy of it than any that enjoy the Gospel, as they confess that defend these words, and this opinion, else it would be Impertinent) of this great favour by mis-improving Natural light. But many were deprived of the Gospel before they could mis-improve their Natural Light, as in the case above-named, and the cause must be before the effect: And God giveth the Gospel to many, not improving their Natural Light well. How contrary is this to Scripture, to say that the Jews had Gods Statutes and Judgments, because better than all other Nations? The Jews indeed were deprived of such privileges,

leges, because of their sin and unbelief; but the Apostle signifies to us, that the Gentiles were not taken in, because better than they; else they might boast against them in the sense he opposeth their boasting. The Apostles were forbidden to preach to some where they found no opposition in the people, and were commanded to preach to other places where they shewed themselves unworthy. And to say, that yet they not long after preached in those then prohibited places, avails nothing; for you will grant that many dyed in the mean time: yet while you say, that Gods denying the Gospel to any, or denying the gracious help of his Spirit to any, is for their sin and ill deserts, I am far from opposing it: I heartily grant it, and it doth not in the least oppose what I say, or help you, while you mean it only *absolutè*, absolutely; But if you should mean it *comparatè*, comparatively, you see, or may see by what I have said, it is not true. If a Prince take away the priviledges & immunities of one City for their Rebellion, and yet continueth the immunities to another City, equal in the Rebellion; If the Reason be asked absolutely, why he took away the immunities of the City, and would by no means spare it, the Reason is, their Rebellion, their ill deserts: But if the Reason be asked why he took away their immunities any more than he did from the other City.

City, it must be answered, It was his pleasure; and some special Grace or Favour to the other City was the cause of this difference, *i. e.* not for any deserts, or less ill deserts of that City spared.

It is here commonly replied, Though it be granted that God doth give to some this way, a special benefit, without any deserts that others have not equally that want the Gospel; yet we deny that God doth it out of any special or greater Love to them, than he hath to others that enjoy it not. And so they suppose they maintain yet by this saying (but it would not help if true) that God doth for the Salvation of all alike; but only wherein mans free Will (or which is all one as to the argument in hand, mans free Will equally assisted by Grace) occasioneth the difference; And they cite a saying of *Aquinas*, to shew they are not singular in this Opinion. But this evasion is very harsh; and very offensive to my Ears: for if benefits be not conferred out of love and kindness they would be only benefits materially, but not formally, and so no thanks would be due for them, no more than for benefits done to a man by another, without, or against the Dono's intention. And so if special benefits in order to a mans Salvation, ought to be apprehended to come, not from special Love and good Will; no special thanks could possibly be accounted due for them:

them : and consequently we are to account our selves no more bound to gratitude for the Gospel, nor no more guilty of ingratitude in not improving it (what ever else we may be guilty of) than they are that want it.

What straits doth this Opinion of denying special Grace and kindness bring men into ? If the Gospel should by the Providence of God be sent into one of the *American* Countries, they must unavoidably according to these principles, think with themselves, We are either better than other *Americans*, and God is bound to do so, or he would be culpably partial, and so would do the same to every Country as good as we : and so they cannot thank him for any special love or favour that he denied to others as good as they ; or they must think with themselves, If we be as bad as others that want the Gospel, we need not thank him for the Gospel, as coming from any love or good will that he hath to us, more than to others that enjoy it not. So also the Jews anciently might have said ; and so proportionably any Town that hath gotten a more powerful Ministry than formerly, Either we are better than we were, or than other Towns ; or, if not, we are no more beholden to him than they are that he takes not this pains with, and so no more thanks due from us than them. They say, Where the
great

great Sultan's Horse treads, no grass will grow: I may say with truth, Where this opinion is held practically, no Grace will grow; and yet some maintain this with great confidence, as seeing there is no way else to avoid special Grace, and consequently Election. And yet this evasion, if true and not absurd, doth not at all take off those difficulties that are pretended to follow from Election and special Grace, but they as much encumber your Concessions still; and a wicked heart would say, I care not whether it be out of love or no, so that God do but that more for me, than others as bad as I, that he knows will save me: for if it be not out of love, I shall be freed from the obligation of thankfulness.

Let such Scriptures as these be well considered to prove special benefits, and to prove them to be from special love, *Deut. 7. 8.* The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because you were more in number, but because he loved you, *cap. 9. 4.* *Speak not thou in thy heart after the Lord casteth out the people of the Land, saying, for my Righteousness the Lord hath brought me to this Land.* For the wickedness (observe it) of these Nations did the Lord drive them out; but not for the Righteousness,

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or uprightness of thy heart, doest thou go into their Land. *Understand therefore* (how he urgeth it as a matter of great concernment in Religion, to make them thankful!) *that the Lord giveth thee not this good Land for thy Righteousness.*

The Learned *Grotius* hath this observation on this place, as seeing it apparent hence. *Prima Dei beneficia sine meritis contingunt; illis, in introductio in terram; nobis, ipsa fides.* Which I cannot English better than thus, "God giveth the first benefits without conditions, and so giveth Faith or the Gospel-condition without Conditions, though other consequent benefits upon conditions. Now I doubt not, but when God thus urged this upon the people [*Speak not in thy heart, and Understand therefore*] as of great concernment in Religion, he would have been very angry if one should have stood up and said, as many now; God's love & kindness is to every one alike, but only where Virtue or Vice makes the difference; and so God either doth not love you better than other people, or, if these benefits have love in them, then it is true, God doth not love us so as to give us these priviledges and ordinances which he denyeth to other people, because we were more than others, for we are fewer; yet (however for any thing we know) because we are better; and not meerly from his good pleasure, without respect,

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to any good or less-hurt in us: and it is true, It is not for our Righteousness in a strict sence; but it was for some occult quality in us a kin to Righteousness: For this would have been to have said to God, I either know better than Thou or *Moses*, or, if you know as well as I, you conceal your meaning to engage us more to thankfulness: For though you seem to speak largely, yet you have not made a sufficient enumeration; for it was not merely from some special love and favour not granted to others as good as we; but something God had respect to, in us, better than in others.

Again, when God said, *Mal. 1. 2, 3. I have loved you saith the Lord*, yet you say, *Wherein hast thou loved us?* was not Esau Jacob's Brother, saith the Lord? yet *I loved Jacob, and hated Esau*: that is, *I preferred Jacob before Esau*. God spake this to upbraid the Jews with unthankfulness, and to move them to gratitude, to love and honour Him as a Father. But one might have replied here according to some, This giving to him and us his posterity greater mercies than to *Esau*, was not to love him and us, his posterity, more than *Esau* and his posterity, though you call it so; and so we can say for all this, *Wherein hast thou loved us, more than Esau and his posterity?* or else, this was not from any special love to him and us, without respect to any special thing
in

in him or us, that would not have been to *Eſau* and his posterity, if as good as he or we; and therefore it doth not oblige us to any special obedience and thankfulness, more than them.

They might have defended themselves, That their ingratitude was no more culpable than that of the *Edomites*, had they been of some mens opinion, thus; There is only a two-fold love or good-will, antecedent Love, and consequent Love, or good-will

(which is a distinction, † Ancient and of good use, and ought to be taken notice of, to keep our notions clear; though I dislike their saying, that the Antecedent love is equal to all,) The Antecedent love is that which hath no respect to any good in men, but doth good to all men, without respect to any good in them; now this, say they, is equal to all men alike. I grant it, to all men; but am proving, it is not equal to all men.

Secondly, the Consequent Love, called also † *Amor justitia*, being according to a Rule and Law; which Consequent Love, or Love of Justification, is Conditional, and hath essentially a respect to some good thing in men, being by, and according to a Law, the Gospel Rule. Now this, say they is equal to all men alike, but where their good-

† Chrysost. in Epist. ad Ephes. cap. i. hom. i. ἐήλπιμα πρῶτον, τὸ μὴ ἀπολέσθαι ἡμαρτηκίας. θελημα δ' εὐσεβον, τὸ γανομέναι κακὸς ἀπολέσθαι.

And *Damascenus* after him, explain's more fully this Distinction.

† If we confess our sins; he is faithful and just to forgive.

ness or wickedness occasion's the difference. And I readily grant this as apparent, That this Consequent Love is to all men alike, as to the main and substance of it, and the effects of it, as they perform the condition or not ; which is no more but this, *He that is Holy, and so continues, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life*, be he who he will, without any respect of Persons ; and, *He that is more Holy shall be more Happy* ; even as he that is wicked, and so continues, shall be miserable ; and he that is more wicked, more miserable, without any exception of Persons whatsoever, as it is said *Act. 10. 34. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him.*

Now, how easily might they have defended themselves, if the Antecedent-love was alike to all, you have seen already : And if this was to be understood, as Opposers generally would have it, of the Consequent conditional love that hath respect to mans goodness or wickedness, they might have replied, What though *Esaü* was *Jacobs* Brother, and so equal in that respect ? Yet this is said to no purpose ; for they were of no equal good qualities, one was a good man, the other a bad ; You would have been guilty of at least not fair dealing, if you had not done for him more than *Esaü* ;
What

What an inconsequent manner of speaking would this have been, to move them to special thankfulness, to greater thankfulness than was due from *Edomites*, if he mean by Love, the rectoral and conditional Love, that hath respect to something in men.

If a Prince should say, when one Brother of many was Executed for Treason going on in his Rebellion, and the other Brethren ceased their Rebellion, and became Loyal, when there was an inviolable Act of Oblivion made to all, on condition they would cease their Rebellion, If he should say, *Was not he your Brother? And yet I have not hanged you all, what cause have you to be thankful in an especial manner, that I dealt not with you, as with your Brother?* They might reply, *This of his being our Brother is nothing to us; we are indeed much ingaged to You for your general Love and favour, in making such an Act of Oblivion upon such an easie condition; but, that you did not Execute us as well as our Brother, is no special favour; for though he was our Brother, we performed the condition, and he did not; and, had we done as he, you would have Executed us also. You urge a fallacious argument to impose upon us special thankfulness, which is not due; It would indeed be right arguing if you meant by his being our Brother, our being and doing like him in every thing; but then it is not true; but if you mean by it*

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only his being our Brother, it will not enforce on us any special thankfulness.

So if two Brethren have equal Stocks given them to trade with, and one hath improved well by his industry, and the other is undone by negligence, what a loose speech would this be of the donor, Is not he your Brother? what cause have you to be observant of me more than your Brother? and how far more great, would your ingratitude be than your Brother's?

What do these words here, Was not *Esaú Jacob's* Brother? but stand in the place of a sufficient enumeration, to signifie that *I think they were equal every way, but only where it an ca- his love and especial Grace made the difference? And how * Impertinently else doth ter to the Apostle Paul alledg them, Rom. 9. 13? *Vindi-*

cate that Chapter, Rom. 9. that it doth speak of the Antecedent Love, viz. Vocation, and not of the Consequent or Justification, from v. 9. to 30. though yet I think some on the other hand, build that height upon it, that they have no foundation there, for; But I chuse to reason from places & things more obvious, as requiring fewer words.

Now if it be once granted, that God doth any special Act of Grace for any without respect to any good in them, which he doth not for others; I see, you constantly and readily will grant, that he willed and decreed to do it from Eternity: For the

For-

Vorſtian Hypotheſes do not take with ratio-
 nal men. So that I think, inſtead of proving a man
 this * Conſequence ; which is agreed on holds
 both ſides, I have more need, if this was a ſpecial
 place for it, to tell people that, ſo they do Grace,
 but grant this Conſequence, it would be and the
 their ſin ordinarily to think of it in their neceſſity
 ordinary duties, except in ſome few caſes, of it, he
 and it is their duty ordinarily to think of holds all
 ſuch things as preſent, or as if they were to virtually
 begin now, but this would require too ma- that I am
 ny words to explain. moſt ſo-
 licitous

to maintain againſt oppoſers ; And I could favourably
 paſs by any errors in a man's notions about Election, that
 lightly he can hold, while he holds this. And I like well
 the moderation of thoſe Ancient Councils held againſt Pe-
 lagianism, & wiſh others would imitate ſo reverend a pat-
 tern, who all of them determined for Grace, and its neceſ-
 ſity, but none of them determined any thing about Electi-
 on, though then much controverted, as not holding that
 fundamental, but left that to be defended & taught by the
 Orthodox Docters of the Church, by ſtrength of argu-
 ment drawn from Scripture and Reaſon, according to
 their beſt apprehenſions.

And further, to put the thing I have ſpo-
 ken of, quite out of doubt. Let any intelli-
 gent man conſider, and he will perceive,
 that he that ſhould hold this opinion practi-
 cally, that the giving and continuing of the
 Goſpel, is conditional in that proper ſenſe
 that Juſtification and Salvation are ; will un-
 avoidably run into ſuch miſchiefs, as I have

before at large mentioned. He could not pray seriously, that God would send the Gospel to places where their Parents rejected it, or where they improve not well their Naturals; but can only pray in such words, *viz.* that, God would send the Gospel to the dark places of the world if they have not, or do not abuse their Naturals; that is, if they be good; but not send it to make them good, while bad; And also cannot pray that God would continue the Gospel where it is, but only that God would continue it to him and his, and the Nation or Nations, if they shall carry suitably to it. For a man cannot cordially pray, yea, it would be his sin to pray, for that he holds God will by no means do, because he cannot in justice, because it would be an unworthy respecting of Persons, or because God hath made such a rule as he doctrinally holds he will not break; no more than he can pray that God would send the Gospel to men departed this life in their Impenitency and Unbelief. And also he cannot Praise God heartily for the Gospel, as coming from any love to us that was denied to others as good as he or we.

I am sensible, it may possibly be in your thoughts to object that this difficulty may truly lie upon me, thus, Do not I pray that God would forgive great incorrigible sinners, and yet I have affirmed pardon to be properly & strictly Conditional. There-

Therefore I will answer this, though it require many words, and also because in so doing, I hope I shall make plain some things that confound some men; And I dare say, that they that do not keep such Notions as these following, distinct, shall contradict themselves almost in every word they shall speak about such things.

God's Love, and Grace, and Mercy, is used in several senses in Scripture. First, sometimes by it is meant, that Love in giving Christ a Ransome for the world, that whosoever of sinful men turned, should Live. This Love, take it precisely so far and no further, it is to all alike common (though I have shewed, in another place, it is in some other sense special) this Love is great Love indeed, and the greatest in a sense; for it is greater than any of the rest taken singly and abstractly, 1 Joh. 4. 9, 10. *Herein is Love, &c.* This Love is absolute and not conditional; he absolutely gave him, *that if men believed, they should not perish*, and whether any believe or no, it no way lessens this, being alien to it; though yet the great actual benefit of it, is conditional. Again, notwithstanding this Love to all, in thus bringing them from under a necessity of perishing by their sins, yet they may be under his rectoral Wrath and displeasure, under condemnation; yea, and all are so, till they Repent and Believe.

Secondly,

Secondly, Sometimes by it, is meant the Love or Mercy of giving his Ordinances, as to the Jews in the Scriptures before mentioned; and the giving the Revelation of Christ in the Gospel. Now, this Love is not common to all alike. And this Love is not conditional strictly and properly; God being not tyed in justice and honour, neither having tyed himself to any certain rule or condition; though yet the deprivation of it, is granted, to be for mens sins absolutely (as *I* have explained it) and none can expect the continuance of it, that carry not suitably to it. This Love also is consistent with Rectoral hatred, and being under condemnation. We may also pray that God would give this to people unworthy and wicked, even while they are so, that it may turn their hearts; and may pray for the continuance of it to people neglecting and slighting it; because, as *I* said, it is left arbitrary to God.

† Illud ne-
scio quo
modo di-
catur,

Frustra
Deum mi-
sereri nisi
nos vel-
mus: Si
enim deus
miseretur
etiam vo-
lumus.

Aug ad
Simpli.
Lib. 1.
qu. 2.

Thirdly, That, called the Love, or * Mercy of Election, whereby God maketh people to differ, the Fruit of it being working the Gospel-condition, turning men from sin unto God. Now a man is under the Rectoral hatred of God, that is, is unjustified under condemnation, notwithstanding this Love, while you mean by it only Gods intention to convert him, yea, and till this effect be wrought, I mean, till after
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in order of Nature, though not of time: for a man is first Converted in order of Nature, before he be justified, or have right to Heaven, which is the Rectoral Love.

Again, This Love of Election is not conditional, neither in the intention, nor effect, or Execution, in a proper sense; though none can expect this effect, but in the use of the meanes, and God doth work this effect by means, and men deservingly provoke God to deny it by their sin and neglect of means, Yet God having tyed himself to no uninterruptible rule, nor being tyed in justice, we may pray for it, for those that neglect means, and seek him not, and have highly deserved his denial of it. We may pray, that God would turn and change their hearts, before they be turned and changed, yea or have any desire of this Grace.

Again; But now that which is most properly called Rectoral Love, or consequent Love, or justifying Love, pardoning saving Love, is properly conditional in the strictest sense, is tyed to a Rule or Law, and is a resultancy from a Law, upon something done by men; to wit, upon their performing the Condition of the said Gospel-Law or Promise, Jo. 16. 27. *The Father Himself Loveth you, because you have Loved me, and believed*

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and believed that, &c. So Cap. 14. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 3. 8. If any man love God, the same is known; that is, loved of him. But you see this Rectoral Love, or Love of Complacency is after our loving of him in order of Nature.

This Love and Mercy of Election, the effect whereof is, softening the Heart, or working the first Grace of Conversion, is not of him that willeth and runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy, †namely this Mercy; that is, It is not to be ascribed to mans choosing Good of himself; but to this special Mercy that caused him to choose, will and run. But the Rectoral Love, the Love or Mercy of Justification & Salvation, is of him that will-

eth, runneth, seeketh, striveth; yea, and is of mans willing and running, formally; I mean only as opposed to it's being formally, as of Gods working it in us: Because if a man did it without this special help of God that maketh, willing he would have right to Heaven, be justified. (It would here be great weakness for any to say, You must not make such Suppositions; for surely we may suppose, such things as a man hath a natural power to do, and that his heart reproaches him, for not so doing: I will only ask a man, making this Objection, this silly Question

† *Hac gratia que occultè humanis cordibus divinà largitate tribuitur, à nullo duro corde respuitur. Ideo quippe tribuitur, ut cordis duritia primitus auferatur.*

Aug. de præd. Sanct. Cap. 8.

on ; Did your Hearts never reproach you for not being willing to omit that Sin which God did not make you actually willingly to omit ?) Also, because else you must say, there are no rewards ; or, that God rewardeth himself and his own Act ; which would not be sense, no more than to say, Gods putting man into Paradise after he had created him, was the reward of his creating him : And also, because the Promise is not made to God but to us, and not to God's Act but to ours : The Promise is not, If God work the condition in us, we shall be Saved ; but if we repent and believe ; this Law or Promise, and so this Rectoral Love, taking no notice which way it cometh, so it be but performed.

We are not Loved with the Love of Election because we chose him, or (which comes all to one) because foreseen to chuse him ; No, in this sense it is said, *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained, that you shall bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain ;* that is, He chose us first in this sense. But yet we chuse him first, chuse the better part first, the way of Obedience and Life first (when he setteth before us Life, and Death in Good and Evil ; and biddeth us chuse his ways that we may live) I say, first in order of Nature before he chuseth, loveth us, with this Rectoral Love of complacency, Pardon Justification.

Now

A Discourse of Natural

Now to answer the difficulty urged ; having thus cleared my way. This Recto-
 ral Gospel-Law Love of Justification and
 Pardon is properly conditional, I mean as
 to the main substantial and great part of it,
 which is this ; *He that believeth shall not
 perish, but shall have Eternal Life* : For
 there is some lesser part of this that is not
 strictly conditional, wherein God hath so
 kept himself uningaged, that he may with
 safety to his Truth and Justice use a Liberty
 arbitrarily, and doth ; as in Temporal
 Punishment, and Temporal Prosperi-
 ty. And concerning this inferiour part,
 wherein God is left at Liberty, we may
 pray, God would pardon such a wicked
 man though he continue wicked, as to tem-
 poral Destruction, *e. g.* Relations may
 lawfully pray that God would not destroy
 his Estate, or take away suddenly his Life,
 though he continue wicked, they having
 some dependance on him ; though yet they
 cannot pray that God would justify him in
 the great things of Salvation though he con-
 tinue wicked. And true Believers may praise
 God, for it is a special Favour, and coming
 from special Love denied to many as good
 or better than themselves, that he doth not
 many ways make their Lives dreadful un-
 comfortable, for those sins they were guilty
 of before and after Conversion : For this
 he might arbitrarily have done, and doth
 so by some sincere Ones, But we cannot
 rationally

rationally, or properly pray that God would give to a man continuing wicked, the full and most properly and usually called Pardon of his sins; for this is properly conditional, and this God will not, yea cannot do, with keeping to his inviolable Rule; but it would be as irrational and unlawful as praying for the Dead, To pray he would do it immediately before he hath made a Change in him. Though yet we may pray God, that he would do something in order to his Pardon, and we may pray that God would pardon such in the sense that Scripture sometimes used the Word, as when Christ said, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*, he meant, They have highly deserved to be destroyed immediately, and deprived of all Hope and Means; but do thou, even as they are, immediately pardon them so far, as to continue Meanes and Patience to them, and strive with them, and Convert them; and it may more remotely connote, after thou hast done so, fully pardon them (*lest, they should see with their Eye and be converted, and their sins be forgiven them.* Mark 4. 12.)

But he did not mean by *Forgive them*, the full pardon immediately: For this would have been to pray for the breach of the Gospel-Law founded in his Blood. Again, a sincere Christian can praise God for special grace and favour in turning his Heart, and converting him while he was unconverted,
and

and when he did not convert others as good, or better than he : And so, for his justification and Salvation, as more remotely and fundamentally coming from special grace, (because the working the condition was so); but not formally. But he cannot in praising God, say, that God gave him his justification, pardon, right to Salvation by such special grace, as that they were denied to others that were as good, or better than he was (I mean as truly converted as he) when they were conferred upon him. They can say, God converted them, before they were converted in order of Nature; but they cannot truly say, Justification and right to Heaven were conferred on them in order of Nature, before they were converted.

You can only now reply upon me thus ; But though God do something special for the Salvation of some, which he doth not for the Salvation of others, as good as they, and so without respect to any good thing in them ; yet he doth enough for the Salvation of all. I heartily grant it, for I know you cannot in Reason mean any more than this, that nothing hinders any mens Salvation, but their own wicked willfulness : For you cannot mean by it, God takes away every mans unwillingness, maketh every man actually willing, and choosing the better part.

I am so far from denying this, that I have
en-

endeavoured to prove it. You see it is my judgment, that none ought to do more than they can do; (taking Can in the ordinary

sense.) And if any amongst * Heathens had done what he could, in seeking and serving God, he should either for Christ's sake have been accepted with that little knowledg he could attain; or else, as *Calvin*

saith, *Comment Act. 8. 13. Rather then he should have perished, God would have sent an Angel to Reveal further things to him.*

If you shall yet reply, and say, But *God doth Love and Will the Conversion of every one*? I hold this as much at least as you do: for you do not maintain that he is resolved actually to convert every man, else every man (you say your selves) would be converted; But you hold that God giveth such means through love to all, that if they did what they ought to do, and therefore could do, they would be Converted and so saved; and that their Conversion is commanded by him, and is amiable and desirable to him; and that this is enough to denominate it a willing and desiring the Conversion of all. If any deny there is any such thing as understanding and willing in God properly and univocally so called, but only something that we men cannot conceive of better than un-

* *That saying of Claudian would please me, had I assurance he meant Deus, natura naturans,----- Natura beatis Omnibus esse dedit si quis cognoverit uti.*

der the notion of understanding and willing, and therefore ought so to conceive of it. I should be far from opposing him. And I grant that this spoken of, is, to be conceived of by us, as a Willing the Conversion of all: and they that say, this is not to be conceived by us as a Will properly, do contradict express Scripture, which is to be a rule of our Conceptions; and I dare say they do not consider that what ever objections they do, or can possibly, bring against mens apprehending this as a Volition or Will, the same lye as much against what they do hold, (as any man may find by trying a little) that God approveth of the Conversion of them that will never turn, and their Conversion is amiable, and their refusal offensive and displeasing to him. And I cannot see that you do thus far differ from your moderate opposers, except somtimes in words: for you distinguish thus (when you are to give the meaning of such Scriptures, viz. *Who hath resisted his Will?* He doth whatsoever he will. God will have all *Salvos fieri* with an approving Will, but will not with an efficacious Will *omnes Salvos facere*.

* *Certum
est nullius
Conversionem prae-
stare posse
intendi.*

But here only is the difference, you say
* God doth not with a precise Will, intend the Conversion of any man. And you mean by it, he intendeth not the Conversion of one man more than another, no further

ther than by giving to all men, through love, power and means enough, and so leave it to themselves, which is that you call the Approving Will. Now *I* and your moderate opposers differ from you in this: we hold that he not only willeth so far as you hold it, the conversion of all; but that he precisely intendeth the Conversion of some; which we use to call a decretive Will, or the Will of Purpose, as we call that you agree with us in, the will of Precept; the object of one being Event, and of the other Duty. So that here is the difference, *I* do not hold that God doth less will the conversion of, or doth less for, or is less gracious to all, than you do, *I* abhor such a thought; but only that God doth more will the Conversion; and doth more, and is more gracious to some in order to their Salvation than you do. Yea, *I* could (if it were worth while) shew, that *I* hold he doth more for, and is more gracious to all that live to years of discretion, in order to their Conversion and Salvation, than is consistent with your Principles.

And take notice once for all, that *I* exclude the case of Infants and Ideots out of this discourse, as being *alien*, and of less concernment in Religion, and also difficult; and so either not to be spoken of here, or spoken more largely to, than can stand with my designed brevity.

If you should yet urge that *I* hold something irrational : for, what though he be beforehand with all, do enough and more than enough for the Salvation of all, nothing hindering their Salvation, but their own willfulness, and he *forakes none but those that forsake him, so that if he did no more for any, we should be satisfied of his justice.

* D. us,
prius
quam de-
seratur,
neminem
deserit; &
multos
deserto-
res saepe
converit.
Prosp.
Resp. ad
object.
Vincent.

Yet why doth he not forsake all equally, that equally forsake him? Why doth he give the Gospel to some that are as bad as others that want it? And give Grace to some that have as highly as others provoked him? And why to such places and persons in particular? Some pretend to go such away as to deny these things, or where they cannot deny, give Reasons.

I answer, *I* could give you something like reason in general, why he would not forsake all that forsake him, and so deserve his forsaking them, but that would not answer the doubt. But why he gives the Gospel and Grace to such in particular more than others, *I* confess *I* can give no Reason, but must with the Scripture, resolve it into his free love and pleasure, and into his unsearchable judgments, though *I* doubt not but God hath wise Reasons that no man in this flesh can understand. The University of Heaven will resolve many such doubts. And it troubles me to see learned men attempt

tempt to find out those wayes that we are told are past finding out, and it pleaseth me to see their attempts as weak as bold. And I should think it no incivility to bid him Go look, that asketh me reasons of these things. But if any urge me as they did *Elisha*, that they might go and seek, I will only say, let them go seek in the words of St. *Austin*, *de Spir. & lit. cap. 34. Si ad illam profunditatem scrutandam quisquam nos coarctet, cur illi ita suadetur ut persuadeatur; illi autem, non item; duo sola occurrunt interim quæ respondere mihi placet; O Altitudo divitiarum! &, Nunquid in iniquitas apud Deum? Cui responsio ista displicet, querat Doctiores, sed caveat ne inveniat resumtores.* That is, If any be not satisfied with this answer, let him go seek him a more learned Teacher; but take heed he meet not with a more presumptuous Teacher. If you shall reply, You seem to grant you hold something unaccountable to men, and so what seems irrational to men:

I Answer, I shall not altogether deny this, but only will say these two things.

First; Remember you are but men; and so no more competent judges of the rationality of Gods attings, when he doth not reveal the reasons of them unto us, (and that it may be, because humane Nature cannot apprehend

them) than the Beasts are of ours, the distance
Movet being without comparison greater.
me quod

*ille perit, ille non : Si verum vis audire, & me movet quia
 homo sum : Sed si tu homo es, & ego homo sum, ambo au-
 diamus dicentem. O homo ! ipsam naturam infirmam
 ac debilem alloquitur Apostolus dicens, O homo, tu quis
 es qui responses Deo? Si posset pecus loqui & dicere Deo.
 Quare istum hominem fecisti, & me pecudem : nonne juste
 succenseret & diceret? O pecus, tu quis es, &c. Et tu homo
 es, sed ad Deum pecus es. Aug. de verb. Apost. Serm 10.*

Secondly ; Though a Rational man in his first undeliberate thoughts would be apt to say, It is fit that all things should be done alike to all, and that God should make no difference, but where free Will makes it; yet these very thoughts do dictate equally, Let Gods government of sinful men be in such a way, as there may be no such Prayers or Praises for our selves and others, for grace and holiness, as I have before instanced in, to shew this opinion would destroy them. But if all men being so wicked, as it is apparent they are, we judg it rational as right reason doth (yea the reason of some Heathens hath) that we should be such depending creatures, as to pray such Prayers, and to give such thanks and praise for our selves and others, then it is most rational, yea, and essential to consistency with our reason, that God should dispose of

of things in such a way for substance, as they have been imperfectly described, viz. that doing enough for all, there should be such an arbitrariness in God, in using special Grace to some.

And if any man of competent abilities, have any temptation to think otherwise, would he but be at the pains deliberately to form any Hypotheses which are not apparently inconsistent with Prayers and Praises, he will find himself, I am confident, wonderfully still'd and calm'd, and far from saying with *Alfonfus*, *Si ego adfuissem, melius ordinâssem.*

If any should object and say, You yet bring in the *Stoick* fate, or something like it. This was an objection against *Austin*, and you may see it well answered by him, *Lib. 2. ad Bonifac. cont. duas Epist. Pelag. cap. 5, 6, 7.*

I must acknowledg, I cannot well understand what that Fate ordinarily charged on the *Stoicks* by the Ancients, was, nor how it was consistent with their principles of morality, except they excluded free-will from that *series implexa causarum*, all of them that we have any remains of (worth the name of remains) being *Seneca*, *Epictetus* and *Antoninus Pius*, who are commonly charged (and *Seneca* truly) with being over great defenders of Free-Will.

But it seems clear that they of them, and other Ancients, *Poets* and others that maintained it, held it upon this ground; that they might clear God of all things that seemed irreconcilable to Humane Wisdom and Justice in the Government of the World; So that when any thing seemed amiss, they could say, He was, alas, bound by Fate and could not help it, and so was Innocent.

I would wish those that charge others with holding Fate, to consider if this following Principle be not like it, viz. *That God doth as much as he may for the Conversion of every one, and that God could not in Justice have made Judas a Convert as well as Peter; else he would have done it.* I grant, He is bound in Justice not to condemn any for not doing what they had not power and means to do; *And he hath bound himself to save all Repenting and Returning Sinners, and none else; and so is here bound.*

But to say, He may not do good, more good in order to some mens Conversion, who, if he did it not for them would perish as well as others; or may not give the Gospel to any, unless better than others that have it not; is to tie him where Justice doth not tie him, nor his Revealed Word; and wherein we grant every King, yea, and Man a Liberty; and would think it a miss to bind them; & is virtually to say, We may not pray

pray for such things for our selves or others, for he is bound: And it is such away of clearing God as he would not be cleared by, but he would rather have us confess we cannot answer such Difficulties, as this Opinion is maintained to answer.

As for *Seneca*, the most Ancient Stoick Writer that we have, this puts me out of conceit with him, he was a *Pelagian Stoick* and hel God did alike for all to make them Vertuous, Wise, or Happy (he useth these words for the same); and Free-will only caused the difference: And therefore (as it would have been inconsistent with that Principle to hold otherwise) he hath much against Prayer for vertue and praising God for it, and not a word, that I remember for Prayer or Praise, for these or any other benefits, notwithstanding his many other good Instructions.

Unum
Bonum
est, quod
beata vi-
ta causa
& firma-
mentum
est, Sibi fi-
dere.
And a
little af-
ter, Turpe
est, Deos
fatigare.
Quid vo-
lu opus
est? facit
ipse feli-

*cem. Sen. Ep. 31. Quam stultum est optare, cum possi, à te im-
petrare: non sunt ad cælum elevandæ manus. Ep. 41.*

And which is worse *Ep. 33. Toram Philosophiæ converte men-
tam, omnes mortales multo antecedit, non multo te Dii antecedit.
Quid inter te & illos intermedium quaris? Distans erunt. At-
m-hercule, magni Artificis est classisse totum in exiguo.*

Tantum sapienti sua, quantum Deo omnis aetas parat. Est ali-
quid quod Sapientia antecedit Deum: Ille natura beneficio, non suo,
sapientia est. *Ep. 53.*

But

But *Antoninus* in these particulars, viz. In maintaining Free-will, and yet special grace, pleaseth me better than many I have better thoughts of. Toward the end of the first book, he giveth thanks for many special restraints, and particular kindneses in order to Religion, much like *Plato* before him that gave thanks to God for it as a special favour (as *Plutarch* in *Mario* tells us) that he was born a *Grecian*, and not a *Barbarian*, and in the time of *Socrates*; things which he knew were not common to all, and he thought were given him out of Love, or he could not have given thanks for them. And especially *Antoninus* giveth thanks to God for inclining him to Religion; and then justifieth God, and saith, God hath done much for him by secret helps and suggestions; so that, saith he, *I* have been only wanting to my self in the 9th. book; § 40. He proveth the Duty of Prayer to God to make us better, and answereth the difficulty that the Opinion of Free-Will makes against it. He thus argues from their common custome of praying for other things,

† Ἡτοι but not for Holiness and Religion. * Ei-
 δέν δὲ τανταὶ οἱ θεοὶ, ἢ δύναν-
 ται. ἐπεὶ μὲν ἔν μὴ δύνανται, τί ἔυχῃ. εἰ δὲ δύνανται διατί
 ἔστι μάλλον ἔυχῃ δίδόναι αὐτοῖς; &c.

can;

can; if he cannot, Why do you pray for other things; if he can, Why do not you pray rather for piety; as that you may not inordinately desire any of these worldly things, or not be anxious about them, rather than that you may have these things?

But perhaps you will say † These things are things in my own power, things of my own free-will, to choose good or evil; he grants they are so, and therefore, saith he, they are more excellent and desirable than external things, and consequently more to be prayed for; and then addeth, † Who hath told you that God will not help in things that belong to your own free-will? do but begin to pray for these things, and thou shalt see what God will do.

† Ἀλλὰ ἔσας ἐρῶς
ὅτι ἐπ' ἐμοὶ ἐποίη-
σαν, &c.

† τίς δὲ σοι εἶπεν,
ὅτι ἐχὶ καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν
οἱ θεοὶ συνεμδανέσι;
αἰξαι γὰρ πρὸς τὰς
τῶν ἑυαεῖται, καὶ ὁ φεί,
&c.

And *Epicætes* speaketh some-where to the same purpose. It must be from a shortness of discourse for any not to see, especially if he read that place, that *Antoninus* is against the opinion of them that hold, God will only give men a power of Willing Good & Evil, but will not keep any men from willing Evil, or which

is all one, not except they continue not willing it; nor will cause any to Will good any further, how-ever, not except they continue Willing it, which is in sense, if sense, He will not do it at all.

As for that which is ordinarily meant by Fate in this angry Charge, you may as truly be charged with it (though untruly) as your moderate Opposers: For you hold (whatsoever some little Retainers that know not your mind, or their own, say) that it is a known certainty to God from Eternity, who shall be Converted and Persevere, and who not; and also that he hath decreed in particular, and *in individuo*, such to Salvation, and such to Condemnation upon this fore-sight, and that it will certainly and eventually be so; not one Person more or less, eventually doing otherwise, and being other-

† *Origen* clearly answereth that cavil of *Celsus*, viz. [That must be and cannot be otherwise, which God hath fore-known or fore-told] by distinguishing and shewing how it can, and cannot be otherwise. *Cont. Cels. Lib. 2. Philocal. Cap. 25.*

wise in the end dealt with. You well † understand how this Decree is consistent with Mans Freedom. And yet these are Difficulties, and require a long and operous intention of mind to un-

derstand their consistency. And some of short heads will be offended at this your Opinion,

pinion, not understanding the Consistency of it with mans natural Freedom of Will, and the Gospel-Promises; or will make it like Fate to themselves. It would yet be a false Charge for any to say, that according to your Opinion and Principle, what God hath decreed concerning mens future Estate must be, and cannot be otherwise, taking such words in the ordinary Sense; for though there be a Truth in this Charge, in a Sense remote from the vulgar use of such Words; yet according to the ordinary and most obvious Sense of such words, this Accusation is false; which is, that men have not Free-will to do good or not do it; or else; if they have, that they are concluded antecedently to the use of it, that, do what they can, turn to God, or not turn, their final Estate shall not be ordered according to their thus turning or not, which is false. And some it may be will undo, or have undone themselves for ever, upon mis-apprehensions of your meaning, and their false Conclusions drawn from it.

So here, *I* know it doth follow from what *I* say, that though God do enough (yea, and more than enough) for all, or will not condemn them for not doing what they had not Power and Means enough to do; yet if He do arbitrarily more for some, *I* mean arbitrarily as not being any way bound to do it, as having made no such promise to them

them or others properly so called, though there are such Intimations, commonly called half-Promises, that it is probable he may (though he may refuse) make such a man willing of unwilling, upon others praying to him in particular for such as bad or worse than others; and also sometimes without any such particular Prayers of others for them; I say, it doth follow from this, that where he doth such arbitrary things, he willed or decreed to do so from Eternity upon such Prayers of others, or without them as the case is, he being Immutable and Omniprescient.

Yet people in going so high in their ordinary Conceptions, would be very apt to make this like Fate to themselves, as it is apparent they do that apprehend, as if such volitions were not now as arbitrary to God as ever: For this is to destroy the right and true Conceptions of such things, as are meerly done by him *prohibitu*, to think that he is by Decree bound, so as they are not now arbitrary.

And therefore, as a man that is deliberating, and thinking upon a return to God, must not go and conceive, It is a meer arbitrary thing to God, whether he will receive me to Happiness or no; this would be an Errour: For God is bound, hath bound himself to receive him; and would have us conceive of him as bound by his Promise;
and

and he must not go and think (though confessed true by both Parties) it is in a true Sense determined by God, whether I shall be saved or not, he knowing whether I would return to him or no; but he ought to consider, God is not at liberty upon my turning to accept or reject me; For he is bound by his promise, if I turn I shall live; and this Decree, or Will of God is well consistent with this Promise, and I must make my Notions of the Decrees of God to give way to this Promise, and by no means make this Promise give way to them; For so far as my Notions of his Decrees contradict this promise really, so far they are false: And that Notion about Gods determination which men, versed in such things, can conceive consistent with this, is built upon his high infinite unsearchable understanding and fore-knowledge, what I would do through my free-will only, or through Grace assisting it.

So when a man is Praying, or designing to Pray for a thing that is arbitrary to God, e. g. for the Conversion of such a Relation (as *Monica* for her Son *Austin*) he ought not to rise so high as to think God hath decreed, whether he will convert him or no, in hearing my Prayer or no^d, and so though God be a gracious God hearing Prayers, and hath commanded me to Pray thus for him, and is apt to be moved with Prayers

ers, yet this Decree may hinder the success of this Petition

For this would be an erroneous Conception, and to conceive his degree to be as Ill, and much like the Stoick Fate: For it is to conceive it is not now arbitrary to God to be moved with my Prayers; but it is to conceive though it was at first arbitrary to him, yet it is not so now, but he is precluded and bound, and so it is to conceive such a Decree as is something distinct from his present Will. This is, I say, to

† Also *Homer* maketh Fate to be *Διὸς ἔδος*, *Jupiter's* ancient determination, and yet *Ilad* 16. brings in *Jupiter* weeping and lamenting, that his Darling *Sarpedon* must be slain by *Patroclus*, for *Jupiter* could not help it, because it was fatal to him.

hold Fate, as † *Seneca* doth: for he maketh Fate (which is well spoken thus far) to be nothing else but an Eternal Determination of God concerning future things: But then (which is a very sinful Conception of him) he looks upon it as though it was free to God to determine things at first, yet now he is bound by it and cannot help it, so that things are not now arbitrary to him being thus bound, *Eadem necessitate* (saith he speaking of Fate.) *Deos alligat. Ille ipse omnium conditor & Rector scripsit quidem fata, sed sequitur: Semper paret, semel Jussit.* Sen. de provid. Lib. 5. Which is a very irrational Conception, leaning upon his Heathenish Apprehension, that things may now fall out to move his

his Will that were not in his Eternal Willing foreseen, or particularly apprehended, else they might move it now if at Liberty. And every one of our short and finite understandings at the first notion, as soon as we hear or think of an Eternal Decree, are apt to have the like Apprehensions, till our Reasons pry a little more into it; as if His Eternal Thoughts and Willing, did not grasp and comprehend all these Prayers to be made, as being objected as clearly to him as present from all Eternity, to move his Will in the sense wherein we must understand them to move his Will now.

Let me advise all to take heed of speaking or thinking of such things as these I am now speaking of; as if they were not free to Him now; as if they were not now to be done *pro libitu*; as if his Decree was once his Will, but is now something we are to have a notion of besides his present Will; as if the doing of such arbitrary things was not now arbitrary; as if there was something tyed him besides his Justice and Promise, besides his own present most-free will. Take heed of that Notion, as if he was as much bound by Decrees, or as really, as by Justice and Promise.

But do you conceive of these things meerly of his Will, as being at present the free things imaginable, even altogether as free to him as if they were to begin now?

K

I

I mean things of this Nature, that he is no way bound to do, unless you will say, bound by his Will and Decree, (which we cannot call binding, but in such a contradictory sense; as we should say, a man that hath free Choice given him, is bound to do what he Will;) as in giving, or continuing the Gospel to a People, wherein you are to conceive him so free as that he may, or may not be moved with your Prayers for them, even as free as if to begin to determine now. And so when you Pray for a good Nights sleep, which God may or may not give you upon Prayer; you must not think, It may be in vain for me to Pray, for he hath decreed I shall not have it: this

* *Desine fata Deum
flecti sperare precan-
do. Virg. Æn. 2.*

is to hold * Fate, and to think there is something may hinder him from hearing your Prayers, besides his present Will, and it is to have unworthy Thoughts of God and to hold an Opinion, overthrowing all Religion, if held practically; and it is virtually to deny, this Prayer was objected before him in his Willing or Decreeing this Nights Sleep. Yet it is very hard when we go so high in our Thoughts, to get this Fate out of our minds.

And therefore, take a man of the vastest Comprehensions in this World, and clearest

clearest in his Notions about these things, and their Consistency with *Gods* present Freedom; yet they are so intricate, and require such Intention of the mind to understand them consistent, that it is his duty in Prayer for these arbitrary things, to apprehend and conceive as if *God* was now to begin to Will them: and such Apprehensions are not false Apprehensions, but only inadequate Apprehensions; and that which the contrary Apprehension would immediately suggest into his mind, would be false, viz. *That it is not now as arbitrary to him to be moved with Prayer, as if he was to begin to be moved with Prayer now.*

• If any should object; What, may we pray to *God* as apprehending, as if he was to decree such things *de novo*, to begin to Decree now? May we pray that he would change his Decree?

I answer, You may, and you may not. Do but consider, that by the Decree of *God*, you mean no more than the Will of *God*, and this may immediately call to mind, that you often pray to *God*, that he would do things which you fear he will do not, or doubt he will not do; and that he would not do things to the Person, Family, or Nation, you fear he is in Anger bent to do;

A Discourse of Natural

this you do frequently, and yet do well.

I grant you may not pray that *God* would alter his Decree, or begin to decree, in the notion that the Word Decree, is used by the custome of speaking on both sides to signifie; for it is used by almost constant custom, to denote the Will of *God* under the very Notion of Eternal, and so signifieth by common use the same that these very words [*To will from Eternity*] would do. Now if a man should pray *God* to will in this sense, or begin to will or change his decree in this sense, it would be in effect, to pray in expresse Words, and Formally under that very Notion, that he would not Will that now, he Willed from Eternity; which would not be only to pray, not considering his Immutability, but to pray him to put off his Attribute of Immutability, which would be foolish and sinful, and contrary to the result of our deliberate Conceptions, concerning his Essence.

But take the Will of *God* as we are bound to do in ordinary duties

* *Abstractione precisionis*,
sive abstractione Simpliciter;
non abstractione negationis,
sive composita.

* abstractly from that
 Consideration, that
 whatsoever he can will
 he alwayes Willed; and
 we may have, yea ought

(or we should otherwise sin) to have
 such Apprehensions as if he was now to be-
 gin to Will it: yea, we ought to pray that
 he

he will do such arbitrary things, as we have some reason to fear he will not do, as when we pray for such a wilful Sinner's Conversion; we ought to consider *God* in this Duty (or we could not be serious and fervent) as one that may, if he please, be moved with the present Duty; and we are not in our Addresses to consider him, as one whose Will was to be moved, or the Request to be arbitrarily denied with this present Prayer foreseen from Eternity.

It would be a weak pretence for any to reply; We pray only in Obedience, and not to attain the things prayed for; or to say, We do not pray to incline, or to move *God's* will; or to say, We pray for the thing, but not to encline *God's* will: If so, you pray only with your Lips, but not with your Hearts; it is to say, We pray for the thing, but not, *ut velit*, that *God* would do it; which is in effect to say, We pray it may be done without, or against his Will, or, We do not pray he would do it out of Love or good Will.

As you are to conceive *God* hath a Will, or you would have sinful Conceptions; so you are to conceive of *God* as being moved with his Peoples Prayers; and the contrary Conception to this would be false: For it would be this, That it is all one to *God* in giving benefits, whether they pray or pray not, for the attaining of those benefits: And

then if you conceive of God, as moved with prayer, you can conceive nothing moved by prayers, but his Will.

I expect that some will yet say, You make God the Author of Sin and mens misery; for if you hold that God doth more for the Conversion of some, than others, then you hold he doth less for the Conversion of some than others, and that he did not Will to do so much for them as others as bad as they. I would stop mens mouths, if possible. You must be so ignorant as not to understand what I have said, or you must grant, that since I do not make him the Author of sin, in turning some men actually from sin, which is a contradiction, that therefore I make him the Author of sin and mens misery in those Assertions wherein I comply with you, for I hold: He doth for all men, as much as you do toward their Conversion; I mean, setting a-side the second power which (because I have a greater dislike of, than I can express.) I will shew you it is nothing, but what I grant every man hath, viz. meer humane Nature, or it is worse than nothing.

And I will, if I can, make it very plain, that all may take heed lest, upon any fair pretence whatsoever, they should ascribe no more to Grace than

Pelagi.

* *Pelagius* did, that at last found out a way to use the word Grace, and God's giving men Grace to obey, but meant by it, meerly God's giving the Natural power of free-will, which a man cannot be a man without, or sin without, confounding Nature and Grace, as *Austin* complains.

* Non dicit Christus, Omnis qui audit à patre & vidit eum, venit ad me, sed venit.

Venire posse in natura ponit, Pelagius vel etiam, ut modo dicere capit in gratia. Aug. lib. 1. de grat. advers. Pelag & Celest, cap. 10.

Sub ambigua generalitate quid sentiret abscondens; gratia tamen vocabulo frangens invidiam, offensionem que declinans, ibid. cap. 37.

It is a First-born of wonders to me, that so many learned men should with confidence maintain that a man is not to blame, or not inexcusable in not chusing Good, or not refusing Evil, except he be made by Grace, through Christ, *ισοθετος*, and *αμφοτερης*, that is, having a Will as equally enclined to Good as Evil; which is, at least, to say, No man sins, or is to blame, except he be a better man than ordinary. And it is the like wonder to me that they should not see, The effect of the Grace spoken of in Scripture, and prayed so much for, and disputed so much concerning these Controversies, is something that men can possibly sin without, can sin though God deny it them: for we need not, yea, cannot rationally pray for it,

to keep us from sin, if we cannot sin without it.

And now I am speaking of wonders, take this also into the number, that those learned men on the other side, that hold, that men can, and do sin, and are to blame, though God do deny them that Grace spoken of, to keep them from sin; that yet they should deny that men in some true sense can do otherwise without it: For this is to say, that all our Repentance is only for doing something that we could in no sense have done otherwise.

Now, lest you should suspect that I speak thus vehemently without reason, against this *aquilibrum*, that it is pretended Grace only gives; let me obtain leave to digress a little farther, to put you out of this suspicion. Tully *de nat. Deorum*, tells us of One arguing thus, *As giving Wine to sick persons often doth hurt, and seldome good; and therefore it is better never to give Wine to sick people: So it had been better that Man had not been indued with Reason, because it doth more men hurt than good.* Now we can well answer this Objection; The complaint is unreasonable, because we had not been men without Reason: and, what hurt cometh to men by their Reason, is through their own default; and, much good might come by it, did they use it aright. But me thinks it may be made apparent, that that called Grace,
which

which some will only admit, would, as they explain it, be really unlucky and mischievous, and no benefit can possibly be assigned to come to men by it. And because I would not be over-large, so as to weary you in making this out, let me beg I may take these things for granted, and not be put to prove them ; and I think I am not immodest in my begging. First ; *That multitudes of men will perish.* Secondly, *That all would have been saved eternally in Heaven, that should not sin, or disobey God in any thing ; I mean, that there is no middle state between Heaven and Hell for men.* Thirdly ; That I may have leave to take their explications of this general Grace, that maintain and plead for it, without naming the Authors, who are many, and deservedly much esteemed in other things ; and I will not mention by way of disparagement any needlessly. Any one may soon see whether I set down their explications of it *bonâ fide* or no ; yea, any one may understand that every one of these things following, are essential to it, to support it, that it be not either needless to the making men culpable, and inexcusable, that have the Natural faculty ; or meerly giving the faculties ; or no way subserving their designe, to avoid especial Grace ; that is, Gods doing something for one, in order to his Salvation, that he doth not for another, and that without re-

respect to any good in him. Now their Affirmations concerning it are these. *First*, This Grace is given to all men alike. *Secondly*, The Effect of this Grace is a thing, that men would be found men without; I mean, men in their right Wits, having the right Natural use of their Faculties without it. For they affirm that to say, Grace only, giveth the Natural Faculties, would be *Pelagianism*; and deny they mean by *Gods* grace, this giving the Natural Power. *Thirdly*, They call this, which I call the Natural Power & the Faculties, the remote Power of Willing and Obeying, but they call that which grace giveth to all men *Proximum potentiam*, a next, Proximate Power;

† Take notice I do grant, that they do say, this Grace is given to make men Actually willing, and they use to complain that they mis-represent them that should say, they hold that God doth not make those Actually willing that are so: For he that giveth the Talent, doth in a true sense cause the Improvement of it. But they tell us, They mean Grace giveth men Actually to Will no further than this common way, by giving a power of Choosing or Refusing: And if I have any Expressions that may seem contrary to this, I so far wrong them.

er; which is not given to make men
† Actually willing, and Actually to Believe and Obey, but to give men a *Proximum potentiam*, a second next Power of Believing and Obeying if they would. The Effect of Grace is say they, to give a man such Power as putteth him in *livio*, in an *Equipoize*: giving

giveth him a more full second Power of choosing

ing Good and Evil ; by this he is enabled more proximately to obey the Gospel if he would. *Fourthly*, They say, a man would have been in no fault in not believing and obeying the Gospel, if God had not in Grace given him this proximate Power ; he could not have sinned in not repenting, or believing without this Power which Grace giveth, and that for this Reason ; because he could not but disobey the Gospel without it, and could not but * Sin without it: And to say that he could do otherwise than sin without it, say they, would be *Pelagianism*. *Fifthly*, They say, it is no sin for a man to do a thing a man could not but do, or omit a thing he could not but omit.

* They mean without doubt materially ; do that Act which is materially Sin without it.

Now let any man, if these things be so, tell me, what this Grace (passively taken) this proximate Power, that Grace (Active-ly taken) giveth, is good for :

First, you cannot say to make them Men; for they would have been as perfect men without it.

Secondly, You cannot say, That they might be enabled to Obey the Gospel: For what Loss would there have been to men if they had not Obeyed the Gospel? There would have been, according to these Principles, no need of Obeying of it, if this proximate Power had not been given: Because they could not have Obeyed the Gospel with.

without it ; and so because they could not, it would have been no Sin in them, no Disobedience not to obey the Gospel, though they had been sound men. And to deny this would be to grant what I have proved ; and what they oppose , That men are to blame in not doing what they have the Natural Faculties to do , though they have not this proximate Power of Grace : And also would make it needless for this end, *viz* To make them inexcusable.

Thirdly, You cannot say that this Grace was needful that men might be saved ; For they would be saved if they did not Sin, and they could not Sin without this Grace, giving the proximate Power ; because they could not but Sin without it ; could not but Disobey the Gospel without it And therefore it would have been no Disobedience, or Culpableness, because they could not do otherwise ; and therefore all men would have been saved if this Grace had not been given, for they could not have been Condemned for no fault, and therefore must have been saved.

Fourthly ; You cannot say, But though they would not if this Grace had been denied, have been Condemned for Disobeying the Gospel ; yet they would have been Condemned for breaking the Law : For according to these Principles, they could not but Disobey the Law without this Grace ; and there-

therefore it would have been no sin in them to Disobey the Law, and they could not be Condemned, because they could not do otherwise than do it, and so they would have been saved.

Obj. But you will say, Your Accusation is too high; for if this Grace be granted to do no good to men, yet surely it doth them no hurt.

Ans. Yea, according to these Principles if it be but granted, That some men will perish; for none would have perished had not this proximate Power been given; because, as they say, they could not have done otherwise, and so, as they say, it would have been no Fault, and God could not have Condemned men for it; and so there being no middle state, all would have been without this Grace, sound and perfect men here, and might have lived jolly and jovial Lives, and have been saved at last in Heaven.

You cannot tell me, I cannot answer these Difficulties: For you have seen or may see, how this distinction of *Natural* and *Moral* Impotency, if admitted, doth unty, or rather cut all these Knots, by shewing; This Grace of theirs is needelefs, for the end assigned by them to it, viz. *To make men inexcusable by giving them Power of Willing, and Power to Obey if they would;*
and

and that Grace which they deny, is necessary (in a right sense) to a greater end, to make men actually willing.

I could further shew you the Inconsistency with it self, and the Contradiction to

** It might truly be said, if this Opinion of theirs was true; That men can for any Impotency whatsoever on them to the contrary, so live all their Lives, as not to need Pardon, or Christ's Satisfaction for any of their Omissions or Commissions.*

Scripture, and the * danger of this Tenent, which yet is a Foundation-Principle of some Discourses, viz. That the Impotency that the Scripture speaks of upon men to any good, is not (to the immediate Duty to be performed) either upon good or bad men now, nor was then, else they had

been blameless (say they) in not doing that Duty : but only it signifieth what would have been upon men, if that Grace through Christ had not taken it off from all. But I have spoken enough for them that will consider words of Sobriety and truth, and too much for them that will not.

Obj. But whence came this Moral Impotency?

I will not say, What is that to you ? (because it is something to you) : but I will say, What have you to do to ask this here ? For I am not now speaking about it, and you have no need to ask it for the Understanding of what

I have spoken; It can stand on it's own legs, without flying to that forrein, or more remote help; however I am resolved to try it for a time, for some Reasons. I answer, First, It came not from God, he made man upright.

Secondly; The Scripture teacheth you how sin came into the World, and much is said, and may be said of that, to justifie God against mens accusations; and much may be said for our encreasing it on our selves; But my business is designedly not to interest this discourse in it.

Thirdly; Let it come which way it * ** Non refert scilicet unde, &c.* will, you see it doth not excuse, and so do all men, whatsoever they say to the contrary.

Fourthly; You see, or may see (I speak advisedly) that there is no Impotency can hinder your Salvation, but what you may prevail against, if you would: for I have shewed you it differs not from the Will, not in *specie*.

Take notice I have not at all denied Natural Impotency on us (for I should then contradict my own judgment) but only say, it excuses so far as it hinders.

There is much of Natural Impotency to many desireable things, yea, in the best in this life, as a punishment, or product of *Adams* Fall, and much as a punishment, or effect of our (in a stricter sense) own sins,

e. g.

e. g. many ignorances, and roving extravagancies of the mind, melancholly, yea, and natural desires or inclinations in the sensitive part of the affections, which are not at all subject to the Will and understanding. And God may and doth heal such things by degrees, by way of reward, upon prayer and endeavours of his people, for their comfort, help, and encouragement in their Christian course; And also it may be, that repeated contrary-acts, and repeated denials, do in a natural way lessen some altogether involuntary sensitive desires. But these things, though done by God and his Spirit, may be matter of the promissory part of his promises, but not of the mandatory or conditional part of them; however not immediately, that is till those impediments be removed, and in the mean time, we are to use those means that we are to expect the removal of them in. I do believe, that not only the rational part of the affections, and that part which is now subject to the Will, but the most sensitive part of them, was subject to the Will in *Adam*, before his Fall, and that he could not say, as we, *I would not be troubled, or affraid, or put into a trembling, but cannot help it; I would have the more affecting and sensible part of joy, but cannot.*

But now alas, if a man would as much as he can, without any unwillingness, many
such

such passions cannot be caused, or prevented; and some desirable passions are caused, when our desires and volitions of them, are less vehement; and consequently, when we less please God in our duties, being more wanting in our duty and obedience.

There is such a thing as Obligation and Duty growing upon us; that becomes duty, that was not so before, upon some Natural inward impediment removed by God's Spirit or otherwise; so that after, it would be ones sin not to do, or not to do to such a measure, things which before were not a duty, (however immediately) and yet things greatly desirable, and their want to be lamented.

But there is a present Obligation, and it is the present duty of every man that hath his faculties and an objective evidence, this day to perform the Gospel condition, to consent heartily to the obedience of Faith, and resolve to hold on; and if he did this which he hath the Natural power to do, and should dye, he should be saved; else he might say, I would, and thou would not; and not only his duty to do something that may mediately and remotely tend to this, else we must say, It is not his duty this day to Repent and Believe, and he doth not sin in not doing it; but only in not doing something else that may remotely tend to it. e. g. It is not this day a mans duty to read the

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Scrip-

Scriptures that cannot, and so not his sin he doth not, though he had opportunities to learn and sinfully lost them; but only it is his sin, that he doth not lament such loss of opportunities, and that he doth not resolve and endeavour to use such means whereby he may learn; and when he can read, it will be his duty to read. So if a man complain of distractions, and a shattered head and thoughts in duty, and that these came on him by his own former negligence, we must say he is to lament these as an affliction and chastisement for his sin; but they are formally sins only, so far as they do not displease him enough, so far as his Will is not enough set against them; and it is not his duty to have his duties free from them, if his greatest desire cannot attain it; But it is his present duty to pray against them, and to use Gods means to be freed; and when they are once subjected by God, more or less to his Will, then it would be his sin to have his duties torn, or so partly torne proportionably, because then it cometh for want of present due care and watchfulness.

* Interest autem qualis sit voluntas hominis, quia si perversa est, per-versos habebit hos motus: Si autem recta est, non solum inculpabiles, verum etiam laudabiles erant-Voluntas est

quippe in omnibus; imo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt. Num quid est cupiditas, & letitia, nisi voluntas in eorum consensionem quæ volumus? Et, quid est metus atq; tristitia, nisi voluntas in dissensionem ab his quæ nolumus: Aug. de Civ. Dei. Cap. 6. lib. 14.

part of what we call the affections both concupiscible and irascible, is but the very motion, the inclination or aversion of the Will, respectively differing according to the variety of the objects apprehended as Good or Evil, present or absent, easily or difficultly attainable or avoidable, *e. g.* Love is a complacency of the Will, desire a volition of a thing absent, and this very desire, were the thing present, or present in the imagination, would be joy; and if so, the chief part of the affections is elicited and not imperated. And as for the more passionate and sensitive part of them which is imperated by the Will, this may be said, that in some the more sensitive part is more subject to the Will than in others; and only so far as they are subject to the Will, they are capable of sin; and so far only as they are not willed enough, or not nilled enough, they are sinful.

And that Distinction of the School-men may be applied unto them all, and be of much use to us. *Amor, dolor, timor*; *affectionis* and *appretiativus*; affective love and appretiative love. By the appretiative, they mean the more rational and less sensitive part of the affections. Take this instance, suppose the Husbands of two Women are dead; one Wife, it may be none of the most loving, is excessive in sensible sorrow, the other a more loving

Wife is more composed, and cannot obtain of her self that passionate stirring of grief. Now this is a sure rule to go by, to judge who loved most; she doth the more truly love, and more truly grieve that would give most of what is dear to her, to redeem his life. It may be one would give much, the other that hath overflowing passions but a little. If a man do Will and desire God and things above, above all the world, so as to put him on all endeavours, this is the true rational Love, and would be accepted, though he should not have the more sensible passionate affective part: So if he have such a real displicency and dislike of sin, so as he would give all the world to be freed from offending God; this would be accepted without the more passionate and sensible grief.

But yet the more sensible part of the affections is greatly desireable, and the want ordinarily to be lamented, and God giveth it as a reward & sensible encouragement to his people. And it is without doubt wonderful difficult, and it requires a great measure of Grace to keep the Will constant and resolved, with full purpose of heart cleaving to the Lord, when affections have not these sensible tastes in passionate complacencies and meltings, which are sensible encouraging smiles from above; I mean (for there may be great deceit here) when

when in Conjunction with the integrity of the heart and Will. But the main thing we are to enquire after, and judg our selves by, is the appetitive part, the more voluntary and rational part.

Pardon such expressions as these, which I have used, (partly carelessly, and partly for explication sake, that I might the better be understood.) He can Will it if he would, or he cannot Will it if he would, which hypothetical speeches are not proper. You may indeed say of imperate acts that a man can do them if he would, or cannot if he would ; But of the elicite acts that are no way imperated, you must only say, he can Will, or he cannot Will a thing simply : or he hath, or hath not the Natural power or *dispositio*, or faculty of Willing the thing ; or he hath or hath not the Moral power, of Willing it. And I confess also, it is not proper to say, A man can believe ; perform the Gospel-condition if he would, but simply he can perform it : for it is in effect to say he can consent if he would. But the impropriety here is competently well hidden, by the variety of expression, and the vulgar takeing of it as differing from volition, as if it was rather imperated than elicited by the Will. Yet I have used some expressions (and I doubt not, properly) that seem to contradict this ; as when I say, A good man would fain

draw on his Will further to Good, and further from Evil ; that is , he would Will good more. But such passages if well considered, do not, I think, contradict this really. Let this be weighed a little ; Any one that speculatively considers his own Souls actings may perceive that there is not only a direct act of the Will, a direct volition that is carried straight forward, to its external object ; but a reflex act of the Will, that hath an act of the Will for its object ; else a man could not pray for the willing of Good. A man may not only Will that which is Good, which is the direct act, but may Will and desire, that he did Will and desire such a thing more ; and this second or reflect act is really a Will, a volition, being upon reasons, and also distinct from the other direct volition, having a quite differing object, and whether it be possible to go further with another reflex act terminated on this reflect act is a question, but I suppose one may. But then (which keeps truth in what I have spoken) It seems the direct act of Willing is essentially before the reflex ; and that a man cannot Will he did Will such a thing, till first he do Will it really, or (which comes all to one) he cannot, Will he did not Will such a thing till first we have a direct aversation of his Will to it. A wicked man cannot remissly Will he did Will that which is Good

Good (as it is granted he may) till first he have a direct remiss Will to it: and if this was not so, it would object before us a most perplexing difficulty. Though yet to come to a meer sensitive appetite, a man may desire he had it, though he have it not; or that he had it not, though he have it. So that this doth not contradict what was said: for in propriety a man cannot Will a thing if he would, except he do Will it.

And also I said, an act of the Will, which is merely elicited; But here (which is strange) we must grant such a thing as the Will imperating a volition, or *quasi* imperating a volition, distinct from eliciting one. And yet this reflex volition cannot, I think, possibly have any imperated effect of its imperating a volition immediately to increase the direct volition immediately; but only can encrease it by putting a man on the use of such means as may encrease the direct volition. As for example, A man doth by this reflex Will for some good reasons, will and desire he did will and desire, and love God and holiness more; This reflex will though in its own Nature, and formally it comprehendeth more of volition, yet it doth not cause a man to love, desire or Will God and Goodness more, with the direct act immediatly; but only it causeth a man to pray for it, and read and meditate on such things as may encrease the

direct volition ; so that the direct act is not subject to the imperation of the reflex act at all immediately ; but yet it is remotely ; for the reflex act puts him on using means to get a more clear, or more abiding apprehension of the worth and goodness of the object, to cause a higher and more practical dictate of the understanding, that the direct act of the Will may be thereby encreased ; it excites and sets that on work that can prevail.

Let any one try if any use may be made of this, either to discover the prevailing interest and bent of the Soul more fully, or any other way. Any attempt of mine, I see, will be in vain here ; such things are too wonderful for me. What boldness is it for men that know their own Souls nature and acts so little, to pretend to know more of God and his actings, who curiously wrought this Soul, than he hath revealed to us ?

I shall account what I have here written lost in part, if it have not some good effect upon the Readers in reference to their Morals, as well as intellectuals ; And therefore will add something by way of practical application, and hope therein to answer some objections that may yet be in your thoughts.

U S E. I.

HOW much to blame are those that dread not Extreame? It is very common with men, when once they are fully convinced that there is a dangerous error on one hand, to be careless how far they run on the other hand, and to entertain an error as dangerous, and maintain it to help against the other; though it may prove as incommodious to their Souls, as once our predecessors found it to the State, when they fetcht in the *Saxons*. to drive out the *Picts*.

St. *Austin* tells us it was the great care of every Orthodox Teacher in his time, to take heed lest they should so defend Grace, as to deny free-will; and lest they should so defend free-will, as to deny Grace: and a good care it was.

*Lib. 2. de
peccat.
maj. ir.
cap. 18.*

Some have spoken against Free-will to good in any sense, have spoken without fear, of over-speaking of mans Impotency to Good, without any check or limitation; yea, and called it a Natural Impotency in the sense explained; and however custome hath so obtained, that the most understand it (without explication) of a Natural Impotency, which to affirm, is virtually to lay
mans

mans destruction at *Gods Door*, notwithstanding Christs Death and the Gospel, and to clear Man. How sad it should be to us, that many have expressed themselves in such terms, (though they did contradict it again virtually) that if wicked men had Believed them (without doubt they had such checks of Conscience, that they did not) they might have encouraged their Hearts, as if their refusal of Christ and Grace was not their Malignity and Wickedness ; was not a Moral thing, but their Weakness, as opposed to Moral and Voluntary ; a Weakness opposed to Wilfulness, or however different from it, a Cannot distinct from Will-not ; which every one hath a Notion that a man may be pittied, but not blamed for. If any say I have spoken thus, and held thus ; but now see it is an Errour subverting the very Foundation : but while I did hold it, I held it only Cloudily and Notionally, but I did practically hold the contrary, or I could not have Reproved others, or Repented of my former Sins : I readily believe you, and shall only say, Learn Charity to those that differ from you.

Again, some have so defended Free-will, that they have maintained, that *God* giveth to Men only a power of Choosing Good and Evil, and will go no further with any. If any such are sensible that Blasphemhy to the Spirit

Spirit is written on the Fore-head of this Opinion, and that it makes the Spirits help, needless to a Man of sound Intellectuals; having a sufficient objective Evidence, and shall say, I held this only Notionally; for I did pray, which I could not have done had I held it practically: I shall say the same, I readily believe it, do you also learn Charity.

If any should tell me I am too Charitable, in granting that Men may hold Errors destructive of Religion, Notionally and Doctrinally, and yet hold the contrary Truth Practically. I answer, I know I am not, and any observant Man sees it very frequent. If you should reply, surely no Man holdeth Contradictions; quite contrary Opinions, however no judicious Man. Yea, I may confidently say, every judicious Man doth so, since every man in this World holdeth some Errours; and this may convince you, *viz.* If there be any man that you think you can truly Convince of an Errour he holds, you do equally think he holds Contradictions; Because else you could not think you could Confute him, or so much as rationally Dispute with him, if you did not think he agreed in something with you, even in that which you will make your medium to Convince him, by shewing that his erroneous Opinion contradicts that which he agrees with you in. And you also

so judge that he holds that Truth wherein he agrees with you far more distinctly and firmly; so that when you have manifested unto him that those Opinions contradict one another, he will rather Renounce and Condemn (for no man can hold what he sees a Contradiction) that Erroneous Opinion, than that Tenent wherein he agrees with you, and therefore he holds as you judge the Truth opposite to the Errour more firmly and practically.

If any should ask me, Which Extream is most dangerous? I shall only answer, there have been many have constantly held this middle way for Substance, yea, the most have done so virtually; and they of them in extreams were in most danger that did least contradict themselves.

And if such an Incompetent judge as I, may speak without offence (and why may I not, you suffer Fools gladly, your selves being wise) I would commend both, and blame both. I commend their Zeal in general on the one hand, for maintaining Gods Love to the World, and his willing the Salvation of all men, on condition they would turn to him. And though I blame their denying special Grace, yet I am confident the main Reason of their denial was, because they were sure there was such general Grace, and none could Preach without holding it in sense; and they could not see

see it consistent with special : and their Opposition to this special Grace was not through any ill will to it, had they thought it consistent with general.

So I commend the Zeal in the other, in maintaining special Grace, but I blame their denying the general Grace. But yet am confident the main Reason of their denial was, because they were sure there was special Grace ; and none could Pray without holding it in sense, while they deny it in words ; and they could not see it consistent with the general Grace ; and their Oppositions to this general Grace was not through any ill will to it, had they thought it consistent with special.

But Sirs, are these so inconsistent, that you must either deny one or the other ? For God to be so far willing of the Salvation of all, as to be willing to receive them on a condition, they have so far power enough to perform, that nothing hinders their performances but their own wilfulness ; And to be so much further willing of the Salvation of some, as to resolve to use effectual means to cause such to perform it eventually ? Is not the Scripture clear for both ? And if we must measure Him by our selves, is it such a difficulty that none can understand ? for one to be really willing to entertain such a one to be his Servant, if he will upon such sufficient offers and perswasions ;
and

and yet resolve he will go no further ; and to be so willing to have another his Servant, that he is resolved to use all means to compass it. Suppose we cannot understand these things, may we deny in Divinity whatsoever we cannot understand consistent, as the Trinity in Unity. It is apparent, that many things that were inextricable Difficulties in former, have in after Ages been made well Intelligible by Studious Men. How know you but had half that Pains, that Learned men have lately taken in opposing, been spent in reconciling the distant Opinions about Grace and Free-will ; That might ere this have been done more satisfactorily which I have here weakly endeavoured, and done but too unsatisfactorily to my self.

U S E 2d.

OWn, and thankfully acknowledge *God* and his good Spirit in every good Work, in things you are sure were done by your own Free-will, as all such are ; yea, though you know not how to answer the Objections you can frame against this thankfulness. Have you believed, complied with the Gospel ? To you was the Arme of the Lord revealed ; to you it was given

given to believe. Are you made of his willing people, it was done in a day of his Power. Therefore say not, How am I to be commended? But say with *David*, *1 Chro.* 29. 14. *Who am I, that I should be able to offer so willingly ? for all things come of thee.* Who made thee to differ ? Why made he thee to differ ? and since you cannot answer this last question, Adore special Grace. Can you say, you must follow him, and cannot let him go ; and that you have, in the sense explained, a Moral *cannot sin* and draw back ? This is not from Self, and Nature ; No the Moral *cannot do Good* is from that. O say, *God* hath cast his Mantle over me, though I cannot tell what he hath done, or how, yet *God* knows what, and something he hath done ; say, The Finger of *God* is here. It is *God* hath made such Iron to swim ; the Father hath drawn How opened he thine eyes ? I cannot tell ; but this I can tell, whereas I was born Blind, and Deaf, and Lame, now I see, and Walk, and hear.

Hast thou this day done some Good, avoided some Evil, overcome some Temptation ? Say not (though true in a right sense) as *Deborah* once did, O my Soul, *Thou hast troden down strength* ; but say with them, *This day we perceive the Lord hath been amongst us, in that we have been withheld from this Sin.*

I live, yet not I, *but Christ in me*, Gal. 2. 10. *laboured more abundantly than all; yet not I, but the Grace of Christ*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. Have you laboured abundantly? it was from an abundance of Grace.

If a good Thought arise in your mind, a good Desire in your heart, take notice whence it is, and be thankful, he worketh to will and do. *The Preparations of the Heart in man, and the answer of the Tongue is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. Cry, *grace, grace*, at the setting of the first Stone, at the first Springings and Offers towards good; and at every degree of Progress, set up your Stone, and say, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Thou hast wrought all our Works in us, and for us*, Isaiah 26. 12.

U S E, 3d.

BE deeply apprehensive of your need of help; cry for the Spirit's help in every thing. He that hath begun the good Work must finish it, or it will never be finished. When you have with *David* praised him for what is past; that you should offer so willingly, and with a perfect Heart, then pray, 1 Chron. 29. 18. *Keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts of the Hearts of thy People,*

People, and prepare (or establish and confirm) *their hearts unto thee*. When you cleave to the Lord with full purpose of Heart, with full Resolution, go unto *God* to satisfy such Resolutions; go to him and say, the Lord *God* say Amen to them. Take heed of leaning to your own strength, do not think you can do with some little courtesie of the Spirit, with some little of the Divine Tracti-
on. We are mutable Creatures, change with every Wind of Temptation, it may be resolved to day, and staggering to mor-
row. Oh our Levity, Fickleness, Oh the Rebellion of the Law of our Members! put no Confidence in your selves: Every man is a Lye. Be not high minded but fear, *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. It is by his Power we are kept through Faith to Salvation; and we can only be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. Not only our first drawing is from *God* unto *God* through Christ, but the keeping us when drawn; else we should draw back unto Perdition: For we are Prone to it. Our goodness is as the Morning Cloud, and early Dew which soon goes away. Say, draw O Father, we cannot come except the Father draw; say while you live, Draw us and we will run after thee; draw, and we will run with it. Say not, Draw, and we will be idle and sit

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still,

still. Say not, *God worketh to will and to do*, therefore we will be idle. You have not so learned Christ, but contrary, *Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling : For it is God worketh in you, to will and to do, of his good pleasure ; that is, For sake not him ; fear to refuse to co-operate with him, lest he forsake you in respect of those Assistances, that come from his free undeserved Will and Pleasure.*

U S E, 4th.

HOW ill do they that Place the Gospel-condition, (the thing that must be done or we undone,) in something that a man may say, He cannot do if he would never so fain. As in Assurance, or, Believing a man sins are pardoned; or, That he shall be saved. Man hath a Natural Impotency to this, till God have so revealed it by some Prophet or Revelation; or some way that he may know in particular, that his sins are pardoned : And therefore it cannot fall, till then, under command. Suppose there had been such a Promise as this (which I abhor almost to mention) : If any man shall believe his Sins are pardoned, they are or, they shall be pardoned, otherwise not ; no man could yet believe it. A man might Lye, and say

I believe it, but it is impossible he should upon this promise: for there must essentially be some way to notify unto him that his sins are pardoned before he believe it. This would have been to have set life before us upon an impossible condition. If a Master should tell his Servant, There is a sum of money in one room of his house, but will not first tell him what room it is in, but bids him believe it is in any particular room, and he shall have it. The Servant may possibly Lye to get the money, and say he believes it is in such a Chamber, but it is impossible he should believe it. And if his Master should beat him because he believes it not to be in some particular room, it would be for no fault: for he cannot do it, till his Master, or some credible person tells him first, it is in such a room. A man must see he hath performed the Gospel-condition, before he may or can, without irrational presumption, account or esteem his sins pardoned.

And so also Relyance. Many a sincere Christian can say, I would rely on Christ to save me, but cannot; or, which is the same. I would cast off my fears, but cannot. Without doubt men will not cry out hereafter, *Why did not I believe my sins were pardoned? Why did not I rely on Christ to save me? for God no where commanded these things immediately; these are not the Condemning*
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sins. But bring out those mine Enemies that would not have me to rule over them, Luk. 19. 14, 17. And the complaint will be, *Why would I not have this man to rule over me ? and why would I not yield and submit to the Gospel-conditions ?* Something it must be that men are Condemned for, that they could but would not do.

But it would be a contradiction for any to say, I would with the prevailing choice, have Christ for my Lord and Saviour, and would not with the prevailing choice.

USE 5th.

HOW comfortable is this to people of upright hearts, that nothing is required of you but what you can do, if there be a willing mind : They are sometimes troubled they do not the things they cannot do, if they would never so much, and they may be so ; but they may not be troubled as if they offended God by this defect, but as at an affliction for their sins. All the people of God are troubled at their unwillingness, and that they do not so much as they could, had they but Will. If this be your greatest trouble, it argueth your willingness to be greater than your unwillingness ; and so you need not be troubled with

with desponding trouble ; but go on mourning over this remainder of unwillingness with tears of hope.

What advantage may we take here , to comfort troubled ones , and to help them to keep up good thoughts of God ! Many of them; through misapprehensions, are apt to think him a hard Master , expecting to reap where he hath not sown, whereas it is not so. Many of them have such strong and sensible affections and inclinations to Good , that even their own Souls do bear that record of themselves, which the Apostle bare concerning others , that they are willing, even beyond their power , 2 Cor. 8. 5. and yet are afraid God will not accept of them in doing what they can ; and so are greatly perplexed , because it may be they have not such tears , or such freedom from distractions as they desire and expect. But as *Abraham* said , *If she will not come , thou shalt be clear from this thy oath :* So if tears and passions, and other such things will not come, and that not from any want of your own will ; you are clear in this particular.

If any should say , *I am willing with all my heart to obey God in every thing.* But this is a small matter.

I know, it is a small matter in some sense; but it is no small matter in Gods acceptance ; and this is no small matter , if you

speake of the original of it ; It is a thing of high and noble discent, if you had rather have a good heart than a great Estate. The finger of God is here , The Father hath drawn, You have better thoughts than you would have , or than you ought to have of corrupt Nature, if you think this fruit grew on that Tree. Corrupt Nature , saith with them , *As for the words which thou hast spoken , we will not hearken.* They are Gods Servants *who so desire to fear his Name,* Nehem.*I. II. *We should praise God, and say, Who are we, that we should be so willing ?*

Obj. *I am willing, but I can do nothing , I do what I can in some weak measure , and would have it better , but my duties are blind, and lame, and torne ; I have done God much dis-service , but can now do him no service worth calling Service.*

Ans. What ever thy sins have been, and let thy services be never so weak, thy weakness never so great , be thou never so unfit for thy Masters use and Service, though thou should'st be able scarce to speake a wise word for him, or to him ; yet, if thou doest what thou can'st , and desirest it was better, and endeavourest to encrease, this is enough for acceptance, as long as thou art thus willing.

If a willing mind, he accepteth what thou hast, and doth not require what thou hast not.

not. We read of a Master, it's like some ^{1 Sam. 30.} Captain or Officer, leaving his Servant a ^{13.} Souldier because unfit for Service, *because he was weak and sick*: But the Captain of our Salvation is gracious; if we be so feeble as to be unable to wield our weapon or follow him, yet if we follow him as we are able, and resolve in his strength to do what we can, and never to turn Renegadoes, Turn-coats; this sheweth we are true to our Captain, and he will not leave us and forsake us, we shall receive pay. * *Deus Greg. non respicit quantum homo valet; sed quantum velit. Moral. Lib. 12.* God looketh not on the quantity or outward extension, but on the quality & inward affection. The desire of a man (saith Solomon) is his kindness, not the weight or worth of the gift. *The Widdow's Mite* was accepted, being her *All* in upright desire, the reason she cast in no more, was for not want of Will, but ability; because she had no more. Yet it may be a question, whether all simply, or all that was not just necessary for her sustenance; but it is most likely all simply, and then it might possibly be her failing, and against the duty of care of her self; and though there might be such imprudence, yet God taketh no notice of it, being in the integrity of her heart. As if a man should lose opportunities from worldly advantages imprudently, through love to God to attend his Service, God

would accept it while it was in the Integrity of his heart , according to the best of his knowledge.

Do but endeavour to Love and Esteem Christ more , and admire Free-grace more, and never fear your natural Weaknesses as opposed to Moral. It is not the outward quality of the Person , or outward Excellency of the duty commends us to *God* but the Heart. You need not envy others Abilities ; serve *God* in your places according to your Abilities. Ministers of weak Abilities and Parts , are as acceptable to *God* , while there are competent ministerial Abilities ; yea, more acceptable, when there is more of Desire and Endeavour to do good , than Ministers of greater Abilities ; and often more successful. Greater Abilities are apt to puff men up ; it is hard to give much , and not let the left hand know what the right hand doth. So, hard to be extraordinary in any Duty, and keep humble. Let Devils and Wicked men scoff at Weak , but Willing Ministers ; and say , (What will these feeble people do ?) as they did , these are but poor Builders. But we Read , *The Wall was Built, for they had a mind to work* , or a heart to work, *Neph. 4. 6.* So such as have a heart to build, may build so as to reach Heaven themselves, and build up others for it. *God* will say as *Jehu* to *Fonadab* , *If thy heart be as my heart , then come into my Chariot of Glory.* Yet

Yet when I say *God* requires the Heart and Will, I do not say only but principally, and yet so only that if a man could do no more it would be accepted. If he have the Heart, all other things required follow proportionably ordinarily, and if they do not it will be excusable: For then the defect is a *cannot*. If the Heart lead, all that have no Impediment follow. All the Members, and Powers, and Faculties in a man, say to the Heart and Will, as the People to *Joshuah*, Cap. I. v. 16. *All that thou commandest us, we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go, only the Lord be with thee.*

U S E, 6th.

HOW encouraging is this to all to come to *God*, to return. We Ministers in Christ's name, and Christ by us require nothing of you, but what you can do, was there but a willing mind. *If there be any thing you cannot do, which some others can, we will tell you, you need not at present, and yet shall be accepted, and *God* will in time upon doing what you are able, enable you to do more. Say not in thy heart, *Who shall ascend into Heaven?* that is, to bring Christ down from above; or *Who shall*

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shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead: But what saith the Gospel, the word of Faith? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. That is, be not perplexed, as if some difficult impossible thing was required of thee now to Salvation, that thou canst not perform if willing; this is to deny Christ's Death and Ascension. What did he dye for, if some impossible thing be required of us notwithstanding his Death? Men will entertain none, nor give wages to any, but to those that can do much, to those fit for their service. When to hire a Servant, a Master asks, What canst thou do? If a Servant should answer, I can do nothing, I have no Skill or Ability, I have not been used to work; but I am willing, I will do what I can: Who would entertain such a Servant? But if any should say thus, and that heartily to God, I am very unfit for any good Work, I have not been used to do any Good, but I will now do what I can; if I fail, it shall be my greatest grief, and against my will. God will accept it; this is all that he requires to obtain the great Wages. Oh Riches of Grace! Is this the manner of man, O Lord? 2 Sam. 7. 19.

The last Invitation to Sinners in Scripture is this, *Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely; Which*
virtually

virtually comprehends, that, He that hath no money come, that hath nothing of any worth or value.

If the Prophet had required some great thing, Would'st thou not have done it? We have not any thing to do for Satisfaction of *Gods Wrath and Justice*; yea, nothing but what you can with ease and delight do, was there but a willing mind. — Say but, and be *Heartly* in it, *Wherein have I done Iniquity, I will do so no more. I will*, this is the voice of true Repentance; *With the Heart and Will man believeth and Repenteth.*

Why stand you here all the day Idle? You cannot reply. You have no strength, ability; do but what you can, and it will be accepted; You will not tell me, however you dare not tell *God*; You have no mind, no Will to work: Though this is it, if you do not what you can. You cannot say, None hath hired us, we had as good sit idle, as work idle, as work without receiving Wages. *I am sent to hire you this day, to assure you of Wages, You shall have your Penny though you come in late.*

Let none excuse themselves from Duty by the meanness of themselves and Duties. Art thou sensible thou art good for nothing? yet give thy self up to him, thou shalt be accepted. Is thy Gift mean, yet offer it: *They that had but little, offered little*

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to the Tabernacle, and yet were accepted. Some it may be have this Temptation; What should I pray for others for? It's too much for me to be accepted for my self. Yet, sin not in ceasing to pray for others, God will hear thy Prayers sooner it may be than theirs that have better thoughts of their Prayers. Give that little when thou hast but little to give. Weak Abilities you see do not exempt you from Gods service, because not from his Acceptance.

Will God accept of what you have, if there be a willing mind, and shall a willing mind be wanting? Will he accept of the Heart and Will, and shall he not have it? God will excuse the want of any thing else, but will by no means excuse your want of Heart and Will: For all other Powers in a man may be suspended from doing their Offices, but only the Will. But this cannot be suspended so as to excuse while a man hath any use of his Reason; Therefore God will excuse all other Defects. *The Blind cannot serve God with his Eyes, or Dumb with his Tongue, or Deaf with his Ears; yet such are accepted of God, while he hath their Hearts.*

V S E, 7th.

How humbling may this Doctrine of mans Ability and Power (in this right sense) to good , be to us ; Yea how necessary is it to a right Humiliation ? And how influential to make the World guilty before *God* , that we and they could have done otherwise, not only in *Adam* (as some weakly speak) but when we sinned ? Do not say , This discourse listeth a man up. Thou makest ill use of it , if it have such an effect on thee ; it is to glory in your greatest shame, it is like being set on fire, with having Water poured on thee. No Doctrine can possibly tend more to the debasing and humbling of men. This should abase us in our own eyes, and stain our pride ; for it demolishes, and even pollutes all our Sanctuaries of Refuge. Many are apt to say , Alas , What can we do ? What can poor fallen Creatures do ? Do you blame us ? Our Disability is only true , in a sense wherein it may lay load on us ; and in that sense wherein we are ashamed to own it ; but not in the sense wherein it may excuse.

If any should say , This Doctrine taketh off too many things from being sins : Methinks others might answer for me , that if the man be in an Errour that way , yet he seemeth to recompense it , by laying greater

terload then ordinary on those, which all agree to be sin.

We are wonderful prone to fly to excuses ever since *Adam* and *Eve* did so before us ; yea, and to such excuses as would lay the fault ultimately on God : but this layeth us naked to our shame.

But if any will say, It is not from wicked willfulness that they continue in their sins, let this try. I call you this day, saying with *Jeremiah*, *Jer* 18. 12. *Return every man from his evil wayes, and make your wayes and your doings good.* Now what will you Answer ? Either you must answer, we will with all our hearts do what we can, and then God will accept you, if real, in this ; or you will answer, as they in the following verse, *We will walk after our own devices, and we will every own do after the imagination of his evil heart ;* or as they answered such a call, *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. *As for the word which thou hast spoken unto us, in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee : But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, &c.* You see you have no colour to pretend it is from a weakness, distinct from voluntary wickedness. And if you will yet go on in your neglect of God and his wayes, whereas Christ said ; *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,* I might be provoked to say, *Father forgive them*

them not, they know what they do. But God forbid I should so say ; God was wrath with *Moses* for speaking unadvisedly with his lips, when he said, *O ye Rebels !*

You that have a desire to fear God's Name , and in the main are a willing people, did you think it was from want of will to do otherwise, when you committed any known sin, or omitted any known duty? Did you think you had so much wilfulness left, and so little Will to those things you have a Will to , and complain of the neglect of ? and so much Will to those things you complain of the doing of ? When you complain of sinful weaknesses , are you not apt to think of them in such expressions as Natural weakness , and not as being in part wilful wickednesses , though they are so far as formally sinful ?

Some have said (but I think not universally true) that *Omne voluntarium est involuntarium* , that every voluntary act is in part involuntary. But we may say it of almost all, if not of every of the duties we perform ; Cry out , oh our wilfulness to evil ! Oh our wickedness ! Oh our unwillingness to good ! Those things we have a Will to, we have but little Will to. How many duties do we perform with a half-heart, and with a sinful indifferency ? who counts it their meat and drink to do the Fathers Will ? Christ went more willingly to suffer

suffer for us, than we to do any thing for him. When we are doing God's Will, how seldome can we say, We delight to do thy Will? we go forward it may be, and dare not turn back, but how often like *Lot's Wife* do we look back? we go forward like those kine that carried the Ark, lowing as they went; we do, and suffer for God, murmuring, repining, *dicis gratiâ* as the phrase is.

If any shall reply, You seemed to grant that a man casting his goods over-board to save his life in a Tempest, cannot but do it in part unwillingly. *No man can with his whole will (saith Aristotle) thus cast away his Estate.*

I Answer; I grant it is so in such a case, because the man in that case is to be a great loser, and to have no reparation. But suppose the Merchant had been required to cast away his goods to save his own life, by a Prince that had given him those goods, and all he had beside; And one able and willing, and faithfully promising to make up that loss; yea, promising that if he cast them away, he should be recompenced an hundred fold; would it not then be strangely irrational to cast away his Merchandize, murmuring, and with such an half Will? Was your obedience and self-denial required by one that had never done much for you, and was there to be

no reward of your self-denyal, I could not tell how to answer you in saying, How should we but deny our worldly and fleshly interest, very unwillingly? But when God hath done, and Christ done and suffered, so great things for you, and made such promises; then to do duties repining, and like that Passenger in the storm that *Erasmus* represents, who cast away his goods *multa mala precans & Superis & Inferis*, What a shame is it? We should say as the people, when they offered so willingly, *Of thine own have we given thee; for all things come of thee*; and should suffer with joy the spoyleing of our goods, knowing we have in Heaven a more enduring substance, and rejoyce we are counted worthy to suffer for his Name. But Did not *Abraham* go more willingly to offer up his Son, than we our sin? He arose early in the morning to go about it, we put off.

I grant, In the sense I have before explained, a good man would do more good and cannot. But yet this is a great truth, and is to be the great charge against your selves, That you can do more good than you do, and will not; You can avoid more evil than you do, and will not.

Friends, though God will pardon you while there is a willing mind in the main, notwithstanding your great unwillingness, while your willingness is the prevailing,

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countenanced bent of your Soul; yet you must not pardon your selves. Pardon not your selves in this unwillingness, as you would have God pardon you.

U S E, 8th.

HOW convincing is this discourse to wicked men! how may we hence urge Impenitent Sinners till they be ashamed!

Sirs, Will you not this day give up your selves to the obedience of Faith? why will you not? There is all the reason in the world you should be willing to comply with the Gospel. He made us of nothing, Redeemed us when worse than nothing; hath made and continued us yet rational Creatures with freedom of will, in the sense explained; we have yet a mind to know, and ability to chuse the Good, and refuse the Evil; and *God* hath made preparations of Heaven for us, and offers it to us on reasonable and easie terms, and hath set Life and Death before us; So that nothing can undo you but your wilful Refusal, as the Scripture every where testifieth, Jer. 13, 17. *If you will not hear, my Soul shall weep in secret, &c.* He doth not say, if you cannot, nor Scripture say any where, men cannot; in a sense different from a *will-not*. vers. 27. *O Jerusalem, Wilt thou not be*

be made clean? When shall it once be? Mat. 23.31. How often would I have gathered you, and you would not? Isa. 1.5. Why should you be stricken any more, you will revolt more and more? prov. 5. 20. Why wilt thou my Son, &c? Prov. 1.29. They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would none of my Counsel, and despised all my Reproofs. Ezek. 3. 7. But the house of Israel will not hearken to thee, for they will not hearken to me; for all the House of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.

Let me plead with you from that Scripture, Isa. 5 3. And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, Judge I pray you between me and my Vineyard. vers. 4. What could I have done more to my Vineyard? These words are not well Translated, for in the Hebrew it is *מה לעשות עוד* *Quid faciendum adhuc?* What was there yet to do? What was there more to be done? Implying, they could plead nothing wanting on Gods part, that he ought to have done, they themselves being appealed to as judges. *Quid est quod debui ultra facere.* So the Syriack, Arabick, and almost all Translations; I find no Translation akin to ours. The words in the Original are the same, 2 Kings 4. 13, 16. What shall be done for her? And Hester 6.6. What should be done to the man whom the King delights to honour? Not, What could be done? Yet our

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Translation hath afforded occasion to some Learned Men of our own, to affirm with some colour from hence, that *God* doth as much as he can with fitness or Justice for every one; whereas, had it been well Translated, it had altogether disowned such an Inference.

These Words are *Gods* appeal to men about his Justice, What should I have done more? What have I not done, that lay on me to do, to prevent your Ruine? Wherein have I been wanting to you? How came this about, *That when I looked for Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes?* Was there any reason for it, that you can stand to? Have not I done enough, so as you must say, Your Destruction lies on your selves, and not on me?

He calls the men of *Judah* and Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* to judg between him and his Vineyard; and, by his Vineyard, means the same Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*. So that *God* here appeals to the Men themselves against themselves, which he would not do, if he did not know that he had a Compurgator within them, that their Consciences must testifie for him against themselves, that they had all things naturally necessary.

Now, you I am speaking to, judge you. You are it may be apt to say, If *God* had done his part, I had done mine. *God* hath done his part, so as there was nothing wanting

ting at first to keep *Adam* from falling, that he ought to have done.

But to let this go, and to take things now as they are in this degenerate condition, and Hope brought-in a second time; there is nothing now wanting on His part, that you may lay your second Perishing on him, and not on your selves.

Many are apt to think or say, we will justifie *God* because we fell in *Adam*, but take things as they now are, and he hath not done enough; things are not brought a second time to our choice, else we and others had not so gone on in our sins, and therefore, if we do ill, let him blame himself and not us.

Do not now fly to other Countries, or such as cannot understand what is spoken, I could speak something of them; But my business is to you that hear, and can understand what I say. And I shall shew you that he hath so done enough for you, that if he had done less for you by many parts, or not waiting so long; yet you could lay your Perishing no-where but on your selves. *God* hath done a great deal more than he needed for you, to make you inexcusable in perishing the second time.

Now bring forth your strong Reasons, What should he have done more? *What Iniquity have you found in him?* Jer. 2. 5. And if I can easily answer you, how easi-

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ly can God and your own Consciences ;

Obj. 1. *If you shall say, There is something besides wilful refusal in mens perishing : For this second perishing cannot be laid on many that perish , for Christ never dyed for them.*

Ans. If this was so, I confess neither I nor any else could answer you. But Christ hath so far Dyed for you, as by his Death to obtain this, *That if any man turn he shall live ;* and this law of Grace is made in his blood. *He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him,* Heb. 7. 25. No man shall ever be Condemned because no price was paid for him ; but only for refusing that which was purchased for him, on the Terms whereon it was offered. The Scripture no where layeth the perishing of Sinners , on the want of a price paid for them ; but every where on their refusal. *You will not come to Me that you might have Life.* These Words imply that there is Life enough in Christ for you : and if you miss of it, it is because you will not have it. If Christ had so left out any, that he had not purchased, *That if they believe they shall be saved ;* then you might charge ministers with Falshood, as well as you might if they should Preach, If the Devils should repent and believe they should be saved, whom Christ never purchased this for.

Would

Would Christ bid his Ministers Preach the Gospel to every Creature, *He that Believeth shall be saved, &c.* if it was not true? Would he bid them make such Offers, and invite such multitudes of Guests, if he was not sure there was Provision enough for them all? Else this should excuse, and they might say, If we perish this second time for want of a Saviour, it is no fault of ours; this would be their Misery and Calamity, but not through their refusal of Mercy that they perished. You might else say at least, There is some other Reason why men fall short of Happiness, and not only because of their unbelief; Nay, their unbelief would be no reason at all of this Perishing: The not taking Physick was no reason at all of a mans dying at such a time, if it would not have saved his Life if he had taken it, no more than his taking any thing else, that is acknowledged to have no tendency to his Health. And it is in vain to say, For any thing, they knew, they might have been saved; or, They and others thought in the judgment of Charity, (as some speak) that if they had believed, they might have been saved: for this is nothing, if the Truth was otherwise; and at last in Hell they will know the Truth was otherwise, and then not befool themselves for not doing it.

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Suppose a man thought a Pilgrimage to *Jerusalem* would have saved him, and others thought so too, but in truth it would not; Can you say, if he did not go, he perished because he went not that Pilgrimage? And will he befool himself when he understands it was to no purpose to have gone? If a man could persuade them in Hell, Christ never Dyed for them, never purchased for them, that, If they had turned they should have liv'd; he would take off a great part of their anguish by persuading them not to befool themselves for refusing Grace and Mercy. The Rich man in Hell is represented by that Expression, *Send Lazarus to my Brethren*, as one that thought that men on Earth, that are in danger of going thither, and that will do so, if they go on, may prevent their coming thither. And when *Abraham* answers, *They have Moses and the Prophets*, it implyeth his thoughts; that men have all things necessary, and nothing is wanting towards their Salvation but themselves.

This of Christ's dying for all so far, is so apparently proved by Scripture, by almost any that have attempted it, that could any of ordinary abilities obtain of themselves to read such, they might easily be satisfied: So that I think I may say, He that is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant still for me.

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The only colourable Objection (that is not virtually answered in what I have said) that I can call to minde, is only from *John* 17. 9. *I pray for them, I pray not for the world;* Therefore surely (say some) he would not shed his blood for the world, for whom he would not pray. But would any be at pains to read that Chapter, he may see that Christ speaketh of himself, what he did in that particular prayer at that time: And that particular prayer to *verse* 20. was only for the Apostles; or at most for them that were then actually believers. And *verse* 20. he prayeth for them that should afterward believe through their word; and so all that he prayed for there were actually Believers, or looked on as such; and the substance of the petitions there can agree to none else, as keeping them in truth and unity, &c. and there is not one word in that prayer for God to cause any to believe: so that we may as well argue he never prayed for the Conversion of any, because he did not in that prayer, and so never shed his blood for the Conversion of any. But can any think that Christ that wept over *Jerusalem* never prayed for it; or that there were none but Elect that Crucified him, when he prayed for his Crucifiers. May we not with greater reason argue contrary thus. Surely he did at other times, though not in this particular prayer, *pray for the world*

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world, since he shed his blood for it. All other objections are reduceable to this common one, That it would be no kindness to dye so as to purchase for any, but the Elect that actually would believe, *That if they believe, & turn, they shall live*; because none else have the Natural power to turn, to perform the condition, but they that he actually causes to turn, and so it would be but to mock them. *Ans.* I grant if this was true, it would be but to mock, as to say to a Lame man, If thou wilt run, I will give, (let his lameness come which way it will); but you see men have the Naturall power to perform the condition; and though they will fall short of the benefit through their wickedness, it doth not follow it was no kindness: and cannot any one see, it would as much follow according to your way, that, it would be no justice in God to punish men for not performing the Gospel-condition.

2. *Obj.* Some may say, But there is something beside Will in it; for Natural men cannot understand the Gospel, and Scriptures, and Will of God; Carnal men cannot know, them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Ans. Not to trouble you with an interpretation that some make very probably the meaning of one of these places.

First; The utmost that can be pretended

ed to be drawn from these and such Scriptures, is; Either that they could not know such things by their reason, except they had been revealed to them by the Scripture; or that Natural men do not love or approve and favour the things of God.

Secondly; If it was so that men Could not understand his Will, this would excuse, and God would never require such to know and obey his Will. As for example, If the Scriptures were written in such a Language as you could not understand, and none that could would translate or interpret them to you; or if there be one that is a fool, and hath not the Natural power to understand what is obvious in them, or if you had the competent use of Reason, but the Scriptures were written so obscurely, that you could not with your greatest endeavour understand them. *I* do believe there are some things so obscure in Scripture, that no man can understand them. Now though it be desirable to understand such things, yet *I* do not think it a mans fault he doth not, and so not his duty: But only so far his ignorance of them is sinful, as it cometh for want of Will, and so of Industry. Nay further, *I* do not think that every man is bound to bestow that great pains whereby he might understand those difficult passages, which yet he might understand with great paines: but

but only so much (supposing he have a competent knowledg of what is necessary) as is well consistent with his other duties.

Thirdly, The Scriptures are plain in the great things necessary, and have been made so plain to you, that either you do or might have understood them. One once said to a Lady that was maintaining the Scriptures were to be neglected, because difficult to be understood; Madam, What can be plainer then this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*? They are so plain that young People may understand them in things necessary. *Timothy* understood the Scriptures from a Child. *A Young man may cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to this Word*. They are written to give to the Simple, and young man, Knowledg and understanding. There is none of you here but it is likely you know so much already, as would you be faithful to that little, and endeavour after more, *God* would accept you.

Let me ask every of you, Do you not intend to Repent hereafter, and turn to *God*, and *Christ*? If not, thou art a more wicked Wretch than ordinary; if thou do, thou confessest by that, that thou knowest what is the main required of thee; and yet art so in wicked thou wilt not yield.

Fourthly, Are you not willingly ignorant of such things? Like those *2 Pet. 3.5*. Such
as

as do not like to retain *God* in your knowledge? such Fools as hate Knowledge and Instruction? Such as say, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Such as those *Psal. 82. 5. Who know not, neither will understand.* *God* offers you the help of his Spirit, and Ministers, but you refuse. Your Ignorance so far as it partakes of Will is formally Sinful, so far as you do not enough dislike it.

Fifthly, But are you indeed ignorant and cannot Read? I will not say it is your Duty this day to Read, because you cannot: But it is to be lamented as a Fruit of sin that you cannot, if you had opportunities to Learn, and lose them carelessly. Yet it is thy Duty to Learn to Read; if it be probably attainable by thee, by the help thou canst get in the Circumstances wherein thou art. But suppose it not probably attainable by thee, so that a prudent man would think it not thy Duty to endeavour it. Get others to Read to thee, and use such means as a man would use that hath a willing mind to Learn, and do his Master's Will; and be Faithfull to the knowledge thou hast, and it will be accepted. How many have gotten a good Knowledge that could never Read? How many are now in Heaven that could never Read? Without doubt, the greatest part of them in Heaven could never Read, when we consider how few could Read in the

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the Primitive times of Christianity, yea, and till almost this Age.

Obj. 3. *But I cannot turn from sin to God, I cannot leave my sinful wayes.*

Ans^w. If thou be one that speaks this by way of Excuse, as the most do that use this speech, being one that goest on in thy sins notwithstanding rebukes; I dare confidently say, thou Liest, when thou sayest *I cannot* in the properest sense of the word, and in the sense wherein it can by a rational man be brought to excuse; that is, if thou mean any thing else by it, than *I will not*; Thou shouldest, say as the Truth is, *I will not*. If thou say, *I cannot will it*; either thou speakest falsely, meaning *I have not the Natural Faculty*; or *I can answer, The more wicked and inexcusable Wretch thou!* For thou meanest, *I will not Will it, I chuse I may not, I will not for all that God and Man can say to me, my Wickedness is so great. Would'st thou speak plain, it would appear to thy self and all the World to be no Excuse, and this makes thee hide thy meaning in dark Words. Speak out plainly, and this is it, I am resolved to please my Flesh and Senses, come what will of it. I have such a chosen Aversness to God and his Wayes, and such a Love to the wayes of sin, that though the Minister should lift up his Voyce like a Trumpet, and speak and sound as terribly as the Trumpet will at the last day, I will go on.*

Obj.

Obj. 4. *But I really would leave some sinful wayes and cannot, and would do better and cannot.*

I would speak here warily. If thy meaning be only this, I would do such things, and would have such graces, if I could attain them without much Trouble and Self-denial and difficulty to my Flesh; or I have some sudden unconstant desire of such things, sometime arising from some sudden Passion or extraordinary Occasion; or I have some little velleity, some motions of the will, but these come not to the countenanced prevailing Choyce and Resolution: But notwithstanding all these, the prevailing bent of my Will, and that which I most chuse, all things considered, is to go on and please my flesh: If this be all thy meaning, I may say, So hath any, or almost any Thief or Robber to leave his course of Life, and would do it, could he but tell how to live in such, or some little less, competent Ease or pleasure as he esteems this course affords him without it: But since he cannot, his prevailing will is to follow on his course.

But if thy meaning be, It is the prevailing bent of my will; my darling choyce is the better part, so as that it is my greatest grief that I fall short. I had rather have a good Heart then the greatest Estate. And though I be frequently guilty of many Omissions

missions and Commissions (though not of very gross sins): Yet there is no sin but fain I would overcome it, and no Duty but I would fain perform it; so that I have respect to all *Gods* Commandements: *God* will accept this. If one should say, as I heard one that was much in that Duty once complain; *I would Pray, but the Words are taken out of my mouth*: If this should be really so, that it do not proceed from want of will, *God* would accept it without words. But take heed of deceiving your selves: If there be a Will in the prevailing degree, the Deed will follow if there be Ability and Opportunity; else it is but that which we call Wishing and not Willing in the ordinary sense. If thou art real, thou dost perform the Christian Duties in some weak measure, and lamentest thy performing them no better. A real prevailing Will is accompanied with Holy Endeavours, and earnest strivings in the use of meanes. Do not deceive your selves, *God* will not be mocked; He will try whether you be real or no. Say as *Jacob*, *My Father will feel me, therefore I will be carefull I seem not to him as one that mocketh, lest I bring on me a Curse and not a Blessing*. I cannot contradict you if you say, I would, but cannot, of many things in this sense; I can only say it is true in *Thesi*, if a prevailing willing mind be presented, *God* will accept what ever fail-
ings

ings there are besides. I can only give you rules how to try whether this be the prevailing bent of your Soul or not, and would do it here more largely, but for swelling this Discourse too much.

Obj. 5. *But there is something else in it than my wilfulness; for God doth not give me grace to Repent, and turn from my sins to God.*

If you mean he doth not give means enough naturally necessary to work this change, I have shewed you it is false: God giveth thee abundance of objective Grace through Christ, as, his Gospel-Promises, Threatnings, and also many helps and motions to leave such wayes and turn, so that nothing is wanting but thy own will.

But if you mean, as you seem to do, that God doth not actually prevaile with you to leave your sins, this is very true, if you do go on in your sins. But may not every Thief and criminal Offender say the same, *God did not give me grace to leave these courses. But will this excuse before any wise Judge?*

Obj. 6. *But God could turn me if he would.*

It is very true. Any man that committeth any sins may say, *God could if he would*
 O with

with his efficacious will, have hindred me from that sin. Yet we are sure, this doth not excuse ; it was not therefore no Fault, no sin because he did not ; else there could not possibly be any sin in the world. You see many going on in all Villany, *God* could turn them if he would , but do you think they are in no fault because he doth not ? *God* hath wise Reasons and ends why he will not with some go any further , but sets bounds to his Will. You seem by such an Objection to wish, He would rule you as *Bruits* , in a natural way not consisting with Promises and Threats, with Rational and Moral government of rational Creatures.

Obj. 7. *Then he doth not will my Conversion and Salvation, or that I should abstain from such a sin, if he doth not actually Convert me, or actually hinder me from such a sin, since he can.*

Ans. It doth not follow. It only follows, he sets such bounds to his will for wise ends ; and will's it no further than is consistent with such bounds: he will through Compassion set Life and Death before you, and warn you by his Word and Ministers, and strive with you so far as to be a forehand with you ; Hath no pleasure in your Sins and Death.

But your Conversion is amiable and desirable

able to him. He will be able to say of them that perish, I would and you would not; and can you rationally demand the Governour of the World should do any more, what-ever he may do arbitrarily to some?

Obj. 8. *But God doth give Grace to some as bad as I, and some way that I know not of makes them willing of unwilling.*

I grant he doth so. But suppose he did not, would'st thou then be inexcusable? How can this then alter the case? Would it excuse all the High-way men in the Land, if the King should some way extraordinary prevail with one or more, not to go on in such courses? What if he do more for some while he doth enough and more than enough for thee, and is far before hand with thee? The *Pelagians* granted, that God did something extraordinary for the Conversion of thee *Apostles, and some few others, in a way agreeable to their free Will and Humanity. Would it not have been a ridiculous attempt for any, to have gone about to have confuted them with this Argument, viz. *That none then are to blame in the World, that go on in their sins, that God did not this for.*

*As the
Author
Hypogno-
sticon tels
us. Lib. 6.

Obj. 9. *But God will require no more than he gives.*

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Ans. If you mean that *God* will require no more of you than he gives you Ability and meanes to do, it's true. But if you mean, He will require no more than he giveth you actually, so as to cause you actually to do it, It is false; else, there would be no sin in the VWorld chargeable on men. He will require the use of his Talents, and this faithful Improvement, as with good reason he may. He hath given thee time, space, and means to Repent; he hath given thee an Understanding, and Will to know and chuse the good, and refuse the Evil in the natural sense. Those *Israelites* fell short of the good Land, because of their Unbelief or Disobedience; and yet it's said in the Moral sense, *God gave them not a Heart to Understand, and a Mind to see.*

Obj. 10. *Sure you will grant that no man can Repent, and Return, without that special Grace of God that actually causeth him thus to Repent and Turn.*

Ans. I do and will grant it, provided you mean no more by it than this, That no man will return without that special Grace that actually prevails with him; else it is notoriously false. A Robber had the power or faculty of leaving his wayes, though *God* did not make him actually leave them.

Obj.

Obj. II. *But I would have had him made me willing to part with my sins, and turn to God, though I was unwilling.*

Ans. This is false, yea a Contradiction. This is to say, you would have him do what you would not have him do for you (I mean, it is a Contradiction, taking *willing*, in both clauses, for the prevailing choice) and to say, You would have him do it against your will. While unwilling to part with your sins, you loved Darknes, and would not be disturbed with Light. You did not chuse the fear of the Lord. You said to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* You loved to have it so, as it was with them, *Jer. 5. 31.* You said, *Jesus let us alone, torment us not ;* and would not have this Man to rule over you. Their eyes have they closed, *lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts and be Converted.* Did you not make provision for the Flesh to fulfill it in the Lusts thereof ? And was this like one that would have his Lusts dye ? Did you not seek occasion to sin, and to avoid Conviction and Reproofs ? Did you not rather chuse to part with your Soul than your sins, when Life and Death were set before you on the Gospel terms ? Did you not say, *If God*

will not save me in such wayes as are consistent with my present ease and pleasure, I will not be saved?

You would have had *him* save you *in* your sins, but not *from* your sins. It may be you would have had the Father so draw, as that you might ride in a Charriot of Ease and Idleness; you would have him so draw, as that you might sit still; But, you said not, Draw that I may run. *Draw me and we will run after thee, Cant. 1. 4.* You would have been drawn to Heaven without your running.

Have you not opposed his drawing, *Refused to hearken, and pulled away the Shoulder, snuffed at his Word, hardened your heart as an Adamant? Zach. 7. 11. 12. Turned back from him, and would not consider any of his wayes, Job 34. 27.* May not he say, I called and you refused? Did you not keep strong Holds and Forts against his Grace, besieging you to overcome you? Did you not labour to build, and set up strong Holds, and high Reasonings against the wayes of God, and labour by a wicked industry, to get off all sight and thoughts of God, that you might be without God in the World? We may say, God forsaketh none in time but those that forsook him first, and for their forsaking him; And if so then he willed to forsake none but those that would first forsake

fake

fake him; And also willed and decreed from Eternity to forsake none, but those he foresaw would first forsake him; And all this is well consistent with special Grace, and consequently Election; provided we say not that he will, and doth forsake all after the same manner and measure. He is before hand with every man, and will be so.

Hath he not knocked as though he would have beat down the house, & thou would'st not open? Have you not opposed the lower Actions and Motions of the Spirit, and VVarred against him in his first assaults, and rebelled and vexed his Spirit in his first approaches, and resolved to go no further in wayes of Religion; If now he take not such internal or external Pains with thee as formerly; may he not say like that, *My People would not hearken to my Counsel, Israel would none of me.* (Heb. *had no liking of me*) so I gave them up to their own hearts Lusts. How long did he stretch out his hands to disobedient & gain-saying Souls? Light came and thou loved'st Darkness, and drew'st the Curtains to sleep, & now it may be, he saith, *Sleep on*, as once to his Disciples; *And yet this very Providence is an awaking Providence, and should awake thee as it did them*; They slept no more after Christ said in anger, *Sleep on*.

Obj. 12. But however, I would have had God have saved me notwithstanding my sins, though not from my sins.

Ans. Very likely ! But would you have Christ the Minister of sin ? *God forbid.* Would you have *God* an unholy Governor of the World ? Would you have it as well with the Wicked as with the Righteous ? Would'st thou have *God* never call men to an account that oppresses thee, wrong thee ? May he not glorifie his Justice on wilful Sinners, chusing their own Destruction, and fitting themselves for it, notwithstanding his striving with them to reclaim them ; as well as glorifie his Mercy on repenting, returning Sinners ? Would you not have *God* threaten Sinners ? Or would you have him not execute threatnings, and so rule the World by Deceit ? He told men what to hold to and expect, if they go on in their sins ; and they chuse, rather to suffer the Eternal Penalty (so they may have the short pleasure of sin) than Happiness on the reasonable termes of it.

Obj. 13. However, I would have had him have threatned a lesser Punishment.

Ans. You may rather say, He threatned too little ; and that it was rather fit, if it
could

could have been, that he had threatned more: For you would not forsake your sins for those threats. This is virtually to say, it is not fit and right, to make severe Laws against those courses that men are not willing, or resolved not, to leave, or cannot find in their hearts to leave. *They shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs,* Jer. 44. 28.

Obj. 14. *But it is almost incredible that men, all men should be so wicked, so insuperably wicked, with proper voluntary wickedness distinct from weakness, as not some of them to do without this extraordinary and unnecessary (as to the making men inexcusable) Help from above, what they can do (in the sense explained) without it. If this was so, God would be just indeed in their severest Condemnation, though he do not give them this extraordinary help that actually causeth their Conversion.*

Ans. It is almost incredible indeed, and will be looked on hereafter as a Devil's-miracle, if I may so speak. And it is to have unworthy Thoughts of God to think, that that-refusing Mercy on the terms of it which is the Condemning sin, will not appear some wonderfully culpable thing that men will befool themselves, and wonder at their wickedness, with astonishment, for; And
to

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to think, *God* will not appear most clearly just in their severest Condemnation. This should rather encline you to assent to what I have spoken, than be looked on as a considerable objection against it.

Obj. 15. But yet it is a thing very unaccountable to us, and almost unconceivable, that God should be so gracious as to do more for any; however, that he should fix on such and such persons in particular, that were as guilty of such provocations by their wilfulness for a time as others?

Ans. It is so. This is a depth that no man can give a reason of. It would be, to pretend to be wiser than the Apostle, *Rom. 11. 33.* Yea, or Christ himself while he was in this World, *Mat. 11. 25. Luke 10. 21.* And to be wise not only above, but contrary to what is written, Not to confess our selves at a loss and only admire this. And they that will give Reasons, like reasons of such Counsels, as if they had been *Gods* Counsellours; I dare confidently say, shall give such as would, if entertained practically, destroy all Religion.

I do think that they do best, that granting and holding such things do least busie themselves about them, but only in admiring such his wayes as above their reach; And I also think that a plain unlearned man, that hath

hath heard little of Learned mens debates about these Controversies of Free-will and Special Grace; That liveth a Holy thankful Life, wondering at Gods mercy, in every good Motion of his Spirit for help and restraint; and in every providence promoting his souls welfare, as being such special Mercy, that it was bestowed on him, when denied others as good and better than he; that I say, such a one hath better, and righter apprehensions though he know not how to explain them; than I, yea or then almost any that have much studied these things. And I would not have entertained so many searching Thoughts about these things (which I confess yet have not been very many) had it not been in hope to convince them that, I apprehend, are in dangerous extreams. And though I think I have, or however I could more fully demonstrate, that these things are in the main, as I have here spoken; yet I cannot but look upon my self as speaking very unsatisfactorily of the manner How.

What Austin speaks concerning Tempus, may be applied to this Adjutorium gratiæ, and many other things. Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quærat; scio, si quærenti explicare velium, nescio; fidenter tamen dico scire me, &c. Confess. lib. II. cap. 14.

Obj. 16. *It doth seem plain, that mans Destruction will be of himself; for it doth not lye*

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lye on Gods being wanting to man : yet we are loath it should altogether lye on man ; therefore we will suppose, It may be it will lye on neither, Why may it not be laid on the Devil only ? It may be, God is no way wanting, so as that we can tell what he should have done more to save them ; But it may possibly be laid on the Devil, or the World, or Flesh.

Ans. If these could force mens Wills against their Wills, (which is a Contradiction) or take away the Natural power of VVilling, or deprive of Power to do the Imperate acts, this would so far excuse. And to say that God would condemn a man in such a case, would be to lay a mans Condemnation on God, as not having done enough for us. This would be to charge God, if not directly and expressly, yet obliquely; and by Involution, as it is commonly said, These words were to charge God obliquely, since they were made use of as an excuse. viz. *The Serpent beguiled me ; And the Woman which thou gavest me, &c.* Satan, the VVorld, and the Flesh cannot hinder us from Duty without our own consent, or against our will : For if such a thing should happen, it would be no Duty formally ; they can only tempt. VVill this excuse a Thief before a Judg ? Such a one tempted me, or the Money tempted me ; But if another had forced him to that Act against his will

will, it would have excused before the Judge. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?* These words were spoken by way of Re-proof for a Fault, which would not have been if *Ananias* could not have helped it. The meaning thereof is, Why didst thou, why wouldst thou, give way to that his Temptation?

Obj. 17. *But it may be God hath decreed to, and so will, Condemn me, do what I can.*

Ans. Abhor such an Opinion or Thought. This, all sides disown: The utmost that is pretended by any moderate men, about this we are now speaking, is, That there is a positive Decree to permit some to undo, or not hinder them from thus undoing themselves. And this I shall not deny, but wish them, that are better able to Judge, to consider (since such Conceptions are only to help our Understandings, that our imperfect Notions may be in some measure rationally consistent) Whether it be necessary to conceive, and so to affirm any such positive Decree to permit; whether a conception of a meer Negation of a VVill in him to hinder, a not decreeing to hinder, be not enough: For you use to found this Positive decree Not to hinder, upon his fore-sight of what men would do if not hindered; now if they would do it without, and antecedently, to such

such a positive Decree, what need is there? nay is it not to conceive a vain positive Act, to affirm such a positive Decree to permit that which men would do without such a positive Decree to permit, if he do not positively decree to hinder? But to let this pass, and suppose such a positive Decree (he giving men means enough, and more than enough) not to go any further in hindering them from going on in their Impenitency.

How comes it about, that men make stops and Exceptions about the Decrees of *God* in reference to their Soul-concernments, and never make such questions about them in other concernes, wherein Learned men that differ about these things, seem better agreed about positive Decrees? Men Plow and Sow, and never question whether *God* hath decreed, whether there shall be any Increase. When yet *God* hath reserved to himself a liberty here, and may, for any thing they know, blast all their Corn, and doth sometimes (and therefore decreed it) notwithstanding their good Husbandry. Yet none here saith, I will neither plow nor sow; for if he have decreed a good Crop, I shall have one; if not, I shall not have it; But this satisfieth men here, Though *God*, it may be, will blast all, do what I can; yet *God* useth to succeed diligent Endeavours. But here, in the case in hand, you have

have far more reason to be confident : For *God* hath reserved to himself here no liberty to blast at all. All agree in this , that none shall fail , or not find who heartily seek, and so continue ; nor shall so choose, and pursue this better Part, and miss of it. *He that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast off.*

All agree, that there are no Decrees but what are well consistent with the Truth of these Promises, and all Notions of Decrees really inconsistent with such Promises are false : As also all those Notions of Decrees that are not consistent with his threatnings, as, *He that repenteth not, shall perish.* But one may perceive how it comes about, that men fly to Decrees here, and not in worldly Concernments. Men are more hearty for worldly Concernments ; but have a mind to go on in their sins , and would fain find out some excuse for their sloth, and to lay the fault on *God* that they perish.

But it would be a wiser, and easier course, *To be making your Calling and Election sure,* than be making Objections from such things as you do not understand, to hinder you. You in vain expect to be carried to Heaven, or to escape Hell without diligent Endeavours of your own. Had those now in Heaven, continued while they were here on earth to make such Objections, so as to be by them hindred from giving up themselves

selves to the obedience of Faith, they had never come there.

18. Obj. *I wish I had heard, or considered such things sooner : you now speak too late. For I may answer, as they answered the Prophet, when called on to turn and live, Jer. 2. 10. cap. 18. 22. No, say they, there is no hope, for we have followed after, &c. They meant, Past cure, and so past care, The case is now desperate. We have so long accustomed our selves to sin, that there is no possibility of our becoming better ; or we have so long provoked God, as that there is no hope we should find mercy. So am I hardened in sin by custom, that I cannot Repent and Turn. I have indeed been wanting to my self, and not God ; therefore I must say, My destruction was of my self, and is of my self, from those former sins, when I would have done otherwise ; but it is not now of my self this day that I hear this, in that I do not turn : for now something else hinders ; I cannot now, with a Cannot distinct from a Will not.*

Answ. It is apparently otherwise, concerning any duty that is now required of you. Do not you know that you sin against God, in not turning from sin to God this day ? Then you can turn, or God would not be offended at you for not now turning. Do you think God is angry at you for not turning to him this day, and can you think it would not be better for you to
turn

turn, or that he will not receive you if you do thus turn?

I dare considerably say upon good ground from Scripture, you can go this day, and do that which would be accepted of God. I do not say, you can go this day and so rejoyce in God and his ways as some others, or that you can have such passionate and sensible workings of affections as others; or that you, that have not been accustomed, can perform duties in such a manner as others, though you was never so willing; & if so, I dare say, it is not your duty at present. But you may do that this day, which would be accepted by God, would you do what you can this day in obedience, and resolve by Gods help to go on, and never to turn aside, and God will cause thee in time to be more Christian like; And if for thy former great sins God should never make thy life here so comfortable as others, yet if you thus cleave to the Lord, with full purpose of heart, as one resolved as an honest man in integrity, that wherein you have done iniquity, you will do so no more; and that you will not live in the neglect of any known duty, but will do what you can in every thing, with the utmost of your ability, and continue thus doing, you should be saved. But yet this is certain, That (though you have this Natural power) you are so wicked, that this you will not do, that is Morally Cannot, without the Fa-
P thers'

thers drawing. And therefore if you do thus Will, and do actually, it is from this drawing of the Father, and from the gracious operation of the Spirit, not only giving the power, but some way causing the very act Willing of distinct from giving the power of Willing and nilling, which every sound man, I mean every man in his right Wits, hath.

Let every one now make hast, and say, *hath he not waited long enough knocking, while I refused to open?* Do not say, I can when I will in this life, turn and be accepted by your Doctrine, therefore I may delay. I have indeed shewed, you can when you will; but I have also shewed, you cannot in a sense explained, obtain of your self to Will it, without extraordinary wonderful help from above.

If I maintained, as some do, that God only giveth men the Power of Willing and Nilling (let it come from Nature or Grace, that makes no difference in the case) and that this is that Power, without which men could not sin, or, which is all one, could not be inexcusable in not turning to God, and that God did not, nor ever will go farther with any that are, or ever were converted; This would indeed be to maintain that you have no Impotency in any sense, but that you can for any Impotency whatsoever Repent and turn, as well as any that ever did turn, and also that this you will have constantly while you are a man bound to repent and obey the Gospel. This
indeed

indeed would have some colour to maintain your presumption; for then I could not tell, nor any else, how to calm your presumption in delaying, but only by these two considerations, you may die soon, or be sooner deprived of your Reason and Understanding; But beside these considerations I could not tell what argument to use to persuade men (who are apt to have as good conceits of themselves, as of others that are no more helped and inabled) why they may not have a conceit, they may at any time, while continued sound men, quit themselves as others that had no more help or assistance from Heaven, and no more Impotency to Good then they will have, and yet did quit themselves well, after great neglects and long delays. But I can tell you, and have told you, that by delaying and neglecting the means, and helps, and assistances he affords, you increase your *Moral Impotency*, and may, and do provoke the Spirit to deny his help to work in you to Will, while you have the power of Willing, being sound men; And if the Spirit do not help you in this extraordinary way, you will as certainly, as what is most certain, go on even till Death, through your morally insuperable wicked wilfulness; And can no more in the moral sense explained, thus Will, Believe and Repent, without this extraordinary help which you provoke him to deny you, than a dead man can arise.

A Discourse of Natural

in a Natural sense without a Miracle.

Quest. *What may we do to be made willing, to obtain and subserve this drawing of the Father, and help of the Spirit to make us thus willing?*

Ans. Some have scarce any remiss will or desire at all of turning to God, and so have as little desire to ask or use directions. Some may be almost willing, but not altogether in the prevailing degree, as for example, some are willing to part with many sins, but it is not yet their prevailing will to part with all. Some again are almost willing to give up themselves to God in every thing, but there is an æstuation or fluctuation of their Will, are waveringly willing, off and on; but are not come to a point, to the settled firme choyce and resolution which is only the prevailing bent. This drawing of the Father is frequently thus gradually; at first a more wavering willingness is produced, & at last a more fixed and settled.

First, Pride not your selves, nay, rest not satisfied as if safe, for you are not, in such begun willingness, in your willingness in part to do some things, yea many things as *Herod*, yea all things like that young man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful, as having some little willingness to what he refused, but not a prevailing choice. But yet own and bless God & his Spirit for such beginnings, if you desire they should grow and increase. Know that these come not from
your

your own wicked hearts of themselves.

Secondly ; Desire others to pray for you.

Thirdly ; Pray for these things as you are able.

Fourthly ; Meditate much on such things as may make you thus willing; The vanity of the world ; Excellency of God ; the Love of God and Christ ; what he hath done and suffered for you, &c.

Fifthly ; When almost willing , uncon-
stantly willing, endeavour to engage your
selves, to tye your selves fast. It is Gods
way, and you may expect his blessing on it,
so to engage your selves as you may say to
temptations, *I have opened my mouth, and
cannot go back; I have sworn and will perform.*

Sixthly ; Let all take this advice. At-
tend on his Ordinances. *He gives the en-
crease, while Paul plants , and Apollo wa-
ters, Zach. 14. 16 It shall come to pass,
that whosoever will not come up of all the Fa-
milies of the earth to Jerusalem, to worship the
King the Lord of Hosts , on them shall
be no rain. Keep in his Church , this is
the way to expect raining on. Irenaus * Lib.
* calls the Spirit, The Heavenly volun- 3. cap.
tary or arbitrary Rain; And also com- 19. Si-*

*cut ari-
da terra, si non percipiat humorem, non fructificat:
sic & nos lignum a radum existentes primum nun-
quam fructificaremus ad vitam, sine supernâ, volun-
tariâ pluvîâ, &c. Qua propter necessarius nobis est ros
Dei, ut non comburamur neque infructuosi efficiamur, &c.*

A Discourse of Natural

pares it to the dew, and the Church to *Gideons Fleece*, on which the dew fell. Keep in the way and road of the Spirit as you expect raining on. *Rejoyce to stand within Jerusalem's Gates*, Psal. 122. The Church is Gods Vineyard, it is good to be in it. It lyeth more especially in the influences of the Sun, and there fall the watering showers of Grace. It is a fearful thing to run away from his walks; And to get out of the reach of those weapons which are mighty through God. Do not say, Let Ordinances alone till men be converted, let Reading, Hearing, Praying alone. *Faith cometh by hearing, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord* (even in the glass of the Gospel) *we are transformed into his Image by the Spirit of the Lord. God opened Lydia's heart in hearing Paul*, Act. 16. 14. *She heard us, and God opened her heart to attend to the things spoken.* Let even them come that attend not; God may open their hearts, as hers, to attend and consider. They are said to reject the Counsel of God against themselves, *that refused to comply so far as to be baptized of John*, Luk. 7. 29, 30. *It is a desireable thing for men to, and dreadful for them not to, frame their doings to return unto the Lord*, Hof. 5. 4.

Now upon a Review of what I have said concerning *Natural and Moral Impotency*, I add this. It would not much displease me for any to deny what I have said in going

ing further then my great design in this discourse, which is to shew that men amongst us have no Impotency but the Moral to the performing the Gospel-condition. Let any man enjoy his own thoughts for me, that thinks there may be some Natural Impotency that doth not excuse from sin, so he do but grant there is no Natural Impotency on us to the performing the Gospel-condition, that is, to the doing what must be done, or we undone; for he destroys not by such an opinion, the Gospel-grace, since he held there is a remedy brought to mens choyce. Though yet if he grant it true of the Gospel-condition, I think unless he go as far as I have done, his notions will not be possibly consistent. And let any man also differ about what is said of them that enjoy not the Gospel, so he do but grant there is no Impotency on us that enjoy it (but what I have mentioned) that can hinder our Salvation: for this is of less concernment to us. And these are both things that I would have excluded out of this discourse, if I could well have told how, and have kept up a consistency of other things of the greatest moment to our selves.

 ERRATA

Page 31. line 10. for *after*, But, read the *Moral*.
 p. 109. l. 5. f. *there*, r. *these*. p. 33. l. 24. r. *settling*.
 p. 48. l. 13. f. *invererate*, r. *adicated*.

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to, if he did not bring it upon himself, I say, that sort of Impotency would excuse equally from such future obedience if a man did bring it upon himself, as Lameness, Madness, want of an object, yea, all natural Impotency as I have explained it.

Yet take notice, that when I speak of natural Impotency excusing though a man bring it upon himself, I only say it excuseth from future Obedience. For I grant that by bringing it upon himself, he may be said interpretatively to be guilty of all the consequent failings of Service and Obedience that follow upon making himself so Impotent.

† Like the *murci* or *Murcenarii*, the Italian Souldiers that *Amilian, Marcel. Lib. 15.* Speaks of, that Cut off their *Thumbs*, that they might be freed from material Service, called, as he saith, *Joculariter Murci.*

As an Apprentice or Servant that voluntarily † Lameth himself, or maketh himself drunk, and so disenableth himself for his masters Service, is not only formally guilty of wounding himself, or drunkenness (as he would be was he *sui juris*, and not Servant to any man,) but is also in so doing interpretatively guilty of the following neglect of his Masters service and commands, that he by so doing renders himself Impotent to perform. Only I mean he is so far made excusable in his following neglects, that we cannot say he is guilty of a new fault in not serving his Master when he cannot, and it would be irrational in his Master to be angry at him or punish him,
not

only for his former fault in making himself so Impotent, but also for his not serving him when he knows he cannot. For the whole malitia or culpability of such after disservice is to be ascribed only to the former disabling himself, because he did or might probably foresee that such loss to his Matter would follow. I said probably; For I scarce think that such interpretative guilt reacheth all possibilities that are very remote or improbable. I do not think that if a man being ignorant whose he was, or of his Masters affection, had Stolne *Lipsius's* darling Dog † *Saphirus*, he would have been Interpretatively guilty of Murder, though *Lipsius* had dyed with grief for the Loss.

† which he makes
Verbes on. *Lipsy* Epist.
Page. 104. & 294.

Now if this be true, that that sort of Impotency which would excuse from Obedience if a man did not bring it upon himself, would also excuse equally if a man did bring it upon himself; then he must be very stupid that cannot hence see, that the determining which way one of these Impotencies came, and which the other, will neither help nor hinder in the putting an end to the great Controversies of this Day, nor can be any account why one excuses, and the other not. Though yet I grant that both the Natural Impotency which will excuse, and the Moral which will not, came on us from *Adams* sin and our own, and so no Reason can be fetched

ched hence from this concession of one excusing, and the other not.

2ly. I have also made apparent, that the moral Impotency, or the culpable impotency which the Scripture speaks of, come which way it will, doth not excuse from future Obedience; and that this is no Reason why it doth not excuse, because of its coming one way or an other, for it is essentially culpable and inexcusable, but the Reason is because notwithstanding this Impotency, a man hath the natural faculty and power to do what he hath this moral Impotency to.

And indeed let any man consider it, and he will be as sure as he can be of any thing. That whatsoever divine command a man hath the natural Power to obey (I mean that the man is no Child, or Fool, that hath not the faculty or ability to know, and chuse the good, and refuse the Evil,) so that he is no way hindered but by his own wickedness (or by that which we call a vitious habit of the Will, be it what it will) / say such a man is bound to obey such command, so that his wickedness though never so great will not excuse him; And this every man is sure of, however some can make a shift to puzzle themselves with the undistinguished words of can or cannot.

Take the wickedst man in the World, that is most accustomed to do evil, and hath the greatest aversation of will to good, and so one that cannot in the moral Sense explained

ned do well, nor obtain of him-self to leave his evil ways without wonderful help from Heaven, yet we are sure he is bound to leave off his wickedness and turn from his sins, and is blameable in not turning from them this day, that he hath this moral Impotency, though God do not such wonderful things for him; And is not only blameable interpretatively, because he made himself thus morally Impotent, and brought this wicked averfation of will upon himself, but is blameable formally this day in not obeying and turning to God, because he hath this day the natural Faculty and Power of obeying such commands: For if he had not, but was made by his sins (as I suppose some have been) a natural Fool, so that he had not the natural Power to understand and chuse the good and refuse the evil, it would not then be his duty this day so to obey and turn.

3^{ly}. I have also shewed that one sort of Impotency, the greater it is, the greater is the Fault; and the less it is, the less is the Fault; in not doing what a man hath the impotency to do; And that the other sort of Impotency the greater it is, the less is the Fault; and the less it is, the greater is the Fault; which manifesteth these two kinds of Impotency to be quite different in their own Natures, and that the difference of one excusing, & the other not, cannot arise from one coming one way, and the other another.

4^{ly}. To

4 ly. To make this further apparent, if such a thing can be made more apparent, consider that (which I have also in part spoken of) Christ's humane Nature had such an abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit as caused in him a morally insuperable Holy Rectitude of Will; And we are yet sure notwithstanding this, that his doing good and eschewing evil, was morally laudable, because this Holiness of will did not take away his natural Power and Faculty of doing sinfully, no more than mens morally insuperable wickedness and everstation of will to good, taketh away their natural Power and Faculty of doing Well. Now we may with as much Reason deny the one as the other, viz. deny that Christ's Obedience was laudable because of the Spirit's causing this Holiness, though he had the natural Power to do otherwise, as deny that a man is culpable in not obeying God that hath the natural Power to obey, because of his morally insuperable wickedness, come this wickedness which way it will. Yea, let intelligent men consider, and they will see that if some *manichean malum principium* should make a man wicked, just as the most wicked man now is, though he can give Reasons why God would not permit this to be, and however not without some great Provocation of mankind, yet such a man though he would not be to blame formally to be so made, yet he would be to blame to continue wicked as he

is,

is, and it would be his fault not to obey God; while he hath, notwithstanding this wickedness, the natural Power to put off such wickedness and to obey God; that is, while he is not a natural Fool, that hath not the faculty to know and chuse the good, and refuse the evil.

Now to conclude, though a man that will not distinguish, may puzzle and confound his own Notions, and may be puzzled by others by the words Can, and Cannot; as in such Speeches as these, *viz.* Can a man obey without Grace? Can he actually obey without Grace? Can he actually without Grace obey spiritually or acceptably? Can he without Grace actually find in his heart to obey? Which Questions are to be answered affirmatively while by the word Can is meant the natural Power and Faculty; else it would not be men's duty so to obey: But such questions are to be answered negatively when the meaning is, hath he not such a wicked averfation of will as will certainly hinder him, except Grace overcome it. Now, *I* say, though such a man as resolves to be in the dark by not distinguishing, may thus be puzzled, yet *I* think no man of competent abilities can easily be puzzled, so as to be dubious about the substance of what *I* have spoken concerning one impotency excusing, and the other not, would he but consider when the words Can or Cannot, are objected before him; whether the opposers mean

mean by those words, the want of the very natural Faculty and Power or necessary object, or only a Cannot in respect of his being hindred by his wickedness or vitious habits.

Thus you see that what *I* have spoken in the Discourse of Natural and Moral Impotency, can (as *I* there said) stand on its own Legs, though *I* should not know how to speak a wise word concerning the propagation of the Soul and sin; And though *I* incline to the Souls coming *ex traduce* as seeming to me the way most agreeable to Scripture, and the best to answer difficulties by; and *I* can almost as easily puzzle my self about the Soul of Beasts being *ex traduce* as mens; yet my design is especially till things *I* have spoken, be better considered, not to speak such things as may occasion *differences*, when my design is to put an end to them. Nor to give occasion to any that have a mind to reflect on what *I* have spoken, to run from the question and things well intelligible, to things less intelligible, and no way helpfull to decide the important controversies of free Will, Election, and special Grace.

FINIS.

